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THE PRESS IN MY TIME

by

R. D. BLUMENFELD

(Master of the Company of Newspaper Makers)

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CHAPTER I

THE PRINTED WORD

THERE are certain apparent essentials of present-day existence which, if taken away, would make no difference in the fundamentals of life and yet their disappearance would completely alter nearly every phase of ordinary affairs. Our great-grandfathers managed to do things quite satisfactorily without railway trains; they travelled swiftly enough for their purposes in coaches. They had no fast steamships; indeed, they had no steamships at all. They lived without electric light and even gas, and yet those who could read managed with the aid of oil lamps to accumulate considerable knowledge from books. There were no telephones to distract or gladden their thoughts or to rouse them from midnight slumber with banal communications; there were no broadcasting diversions, no motor-cars! no bicycles to get in the way of the motor-cars, no moving pictures, and finally thousands upon thousands and yet more thousands of our immediate forbears went to bed night after night in unruffled ignorance of what the world had been doing or was about

to do, simply because they did not read the newspapers ; and if they did, the newspapers told them next to nothing of that day's news.

The fact is that in the cycle of a hundred years the business of newspaper-making has developed inordinately. It has altered the habits and thoughts of the so-called civilised world. It has caused the printed word to mould and direct humanity as it has never been directed before. It has created an industry which has become the mouthpiece at once of authority, of demagoguery, of democracy and of privilege. Side by side with the professors of art and literature the invention of Gutenberg has produced a race of literary artisans whom the world knows as journalists ; men and women trained to an old calling in a new way.

It is my task here to tell of the changes, the advances, the expansions and the retardations that have taken place in the journalism of my time.

Half a century has slipped away into eternity since I first became a journalist.

Is not this the time, at the beginning of my story, to ask what is a journalist and what is journalism ? I confess that after all these years

I am still diffident about providing what I should call a correct answer. What is a newspaper? What is news? In the confusion and welter of the present-day orgies created by electrical contrivances, by Linotype machines, by noiseless typewriters and noisy megaphones, by radio pronouncements and machinery spewing out fifty thousand twenty-page papers per hour, it is something of a task to sort out the details and make a comprehensive whole.

Journalism, since I began, has become a commercial enterprise, like banking and milling and mining. The great journalist of to-day sits, not at an editorial desk amidst paste-pots, scissors, cigar stubs and flimsy paper—I recall all these properties, for my father sat at such a desk and he was a great journalist—but in a richly decorated room equipped for business, for reports about circulation, advertising revenue, paper contracts, and what is nowadays called “Big Business.” Here and there we find such a man as much, perhaps a little more, interested in the purely editorial activities of his enterprise, but if this is so it is, perhaps, because he is so rich that he can afford to indulge his hobby, which may be likened to the ownership of a

great yacht or an expensive racing stable. The Editor who has more concern for his political affinities than he has for, say, the free-gift circulation department is a rarity.

Primarily, however, even in these days of newspaper pyrotechnics with abnormal headlines and "Walk-up! Walk-up!" appeals to the crowd, no newspaper can hope to be successful without its backbone of news. The problem of what is news and what is the sham stuff that is so insistently fobbed off on us must sooner or later be settled, for if the sham article is ever permitted to maintain itself it will grow and grow until civilisation itself will disappear, and we shall sink in a pit of false fireworks and hopeless perversions.

News, first, real, not sham news, must mark the successful conduct of any newspaper. By news, I mean actualities, things that have happened or are about to happen—facts and occurrences which are likely to interest newspaper readers, or about which they want to be, or ought to be informed. An earthquake in Japan, a new discovery or invention, the assassination of a prominent man, the failure of a bank, a split in the Cabinet, the escape of a

lion from the Zoo, a destructive hail-storm, an attack of coughing of the Derby favourite—all that is *news*. It may be anything from an epoch-making event to an interesting triviality of the moment, but it is always a happening, a fact. It may even be a rumour or conjecture of a happening, provided that such rumour or conjecture is well authenticated and not mere gossip or wild guess-work, for that is sham news, and a good editor will have none of it.

News, then, is accurate information about any event of public or human interest, and it is the primary function of a newspaper to supply this information. A newspaper is first and foremost an organ for the dissemination of news. Views and opinions, advice, criticism, exhortation, all these things the modern newspaper supplies in abundance, and they are the main source of the immense influence it exercises; but they are not news, and they are subordinate to news in the life of the paper. Strictly speaking, they are not essential to its existence.

Some editors have conducted their journals as news organs only. Edward Malet, for example, the Editor of the *Daily Courant*, the first daily newspaper published in England

(1702), expressly disclaimed his intention of supplying his readers with anything but the bare news, "supposing them to have sense enough to make reflections for themselves." The popular newspapers that were started in America during the eighteenth century were practically news journals and nothing else. They gave hardly any space to editorial articles or expressions of opinion, but simply printed news, and advertisements, which are, of course, a form of news.

Again, with the democratisation of the Press in England during the present century, the original character of the newspaper as a news organ, which had to a large extent been lost through the development of the English Press as a political party press, has reasserted itself. Whereas, in Victorian times, people bought their newspapers for their leading articles and the political principles they stood for, they buy them to-day for the news they give and the way they present it. The last newspaper to rely for its circulation on the political guidance it offered was the recent evening *Westminster Gazette*, under its accomplished Editor, Mr. J. Alfred Spender. It never had more than about 25,000

readers ; nor did it aspire to more ; but it could not survive. The multi-million circulations of the big national newspapers of to-day are founded on news and advertisements ; and whatever other aims and ambitions an enterprising editor may have, his chief aim always is to be “ first with the news.”

To-day, when everyone has formed the newspaper habit, we talk glibly of the immense power and influence of the Press. But do we realise the How and Why of this power and influence, its historical necessity, its psychological *raison d'être* ? Why do people read newspapers ? What purpose do they serve ? What want do they meet in the life of the individual and the community ? What needs and demands—emotional, practical, intellectual, or purely instinctive—of *Homo sapiens* does this vast and complex institution of the modern Press exist to serve ?

Clearly, it is not an arbitrary creation forced on an unwilling humanity : it is an historical development that has grown up as an organic process in the complex life of modern civilisation. The story of the newspaper in its human and historical relations to the public it serves, in its functional workings within the organism of

modern society, and in what I have called its psychological *raison d'être*, has never, so far as I know, been treated with any fullness, and in the following chapters I have essayed to tell it in the light of my own half-century of experience and reflective observation.

I will begin with what I have already said is the basic matter of all journalism—*news*. For it was the demand for news that called the first newspaper into being, and it is by its news that a newspaper lives, no matter what other activities it may embark on.

The fundamental character of news does not change. Nor does the character of the demand for it. Human nature remains the same through all the mutations of historical change. The same things are happening to-day that happened thousands of years ago; and the same things that interest people to-day interested their forefathers. Newspapers did not create the demand for news; they merely provided an extremely effective means of meeting it. The newspaper of to-day supplies its readers with a sort of daily epitome of contemporary world-history. Seeing what a vast, full, crowded and infinitely varied world we live in, this is a stupendous

feat, only rendered possible by the marvellous inventions of technical science.

But in the much smaller and simpler world of the past, the same thing was attempted and not inadequately performed long before the age of printing. If you turn, for example, to the *Acta Diurna*, the daily news bulletin published by the Roman Senate and posted up in the chief public places, you will find their news content very similar to that of a modern newspaper. They published political and law reports, government decrees, a court circular, statistics of births and deaths, news from the provinces, information about the corn supply and similar matters; and in addition they included all those popular and sensational features that fill the columns of our popular Press—society gossip, crimes, trials, executions, fires, accidents, weather phenomena, sport and so forth. In a word, the Roman public demanded exactly the same kind of news and information that the modern public demands, and in a measure these were supplied to it.

But the dissemination of news is far older than the *Acta Diurna* of Imperial Rome. Indeed the history of news is as old as the origin of

expression. News came into existence the moment when one creature was able to convey to another the knowledge of an occurrence. The ancient tribesman was just as eager to learn the result of the hunt as the sporting reader is to-day to learn the result of the races, and the ancient tribeswoman gossiped just as modern woman does. To picture in our minds, therefore, the birth of news is not difficult. What is much more difficult is to discover the beginnings of news-recording, that is, the genealogy of the newspaper. Some authorities say that the first newspaper was published in Pekin in 50 B.C. Others declare that the first public journal was the official Roman "Gazette" referred to above.

Both these statements are, I believe, incorrect. The earliest known records were much older. They were inscribed on clay tablets and many-sided cylinders in Babylonia, Assyria and Egypt, and many of them, referring to events between 1900 and 626 B.C., have been recovered from ruins. In some fragments of these, part of the famous library of Assur-bani-pal, were found inscribed the stories of the Creation and the Deluge in the form of mythological legend. But the legends were not so mythological as

represented. The Creation happened, of that we have no doubt. Modern archaeological research has proved that the Deluge also happened. At least as far as the Deluge is concerned, we may say that the tablet dealt with actual events, and that it therefore tells us a news-story.

The language used by the author to record what was probably the world's most tragic episode is picturesque and concise. I would recommend young reporters to pay a visit to the British Museum and read it.

Other tablets record news which is clearly not legend. They tell of wars, conquests, sacking of cities, destruction of peoples and the building of new palaces and temples. Occasionally they disclose a little court gossip, as, for example, the complaint of one king to another that he has refused to give him his daughter on the ground that she is "too young and not beautiful."

The reporters of antiquity had to put what they had to say on a much smaller space. Hence they confined themselves strictly to facts and developed a style which had all the virtues of good writing.

Here I may interject my query, "What is a journalist?" The gentlemen of ancient days who told news concisely, directly and in good style were undoubtedly journalists. I do not think the standard could be passed to-day by 90 per cent. of the people who call themselves journalists. They may be able to write novels, but they do not know news. If by what I call a concatenation of circumstances a piece of news falls their way, they think they must dramatise it, dress it up, garnish it with adjectives, pile on the superlatives and serve it up all head-lined and beribboned until it is no longer news but mere limelight drama pummelled out of all semblance to its former human aspects.

There is just this consolation. Present-day sensationalism is nothing compared to that of the sixteenth century. It is true that in the sixteenth century the newspaper as we understand it was not yet born. There was an abundance of printed news-pamphlets, and of isolated news-sheets which printed the announcement of some single important or sensational event, but so far as is known, the newspaper proper, *i.e.* a publication issued in a continued

series, did not make its appearance until the following century.

These printed news-sheets, or "news-books" as they were often called in England, were gradually taking the place of the manuscript news-letters which were issued in the various capitals and large commercial towns of Europe, and had hitherto formed the chief method of news circulation. The news they printed was usually of a sensational and trivial kind. This may be partly accounted for by the fact that there was no such thing as liberty of the Press in those days, and the printing of political news was strictly prohibited. But, however that may be, the sixteenth-century journalists were adepts in the art of yellow journalism. No modern newspaper could rival the news records of that time for sensationalism.

It was a credulous age. No clear conception of publishable news existed. Everything that was printed as news was eagerly sought after. Ordinary episodes were described as marvellous occurrences. Even normal and seasonal manifestations of wind, rain, thunder and lightning were recorded in exaggerated and awe-inspiring language. One news-sheet, dated 1583, bears

the title " Wonderful and strange newes out of Suffolke and Essex where it rayned wheat for the space of six or seven miles." Another dated 1577, and bearing the title " A Strange and Terrible Wonder wrought very late in the parish church of Bungay," tells how during a terrible tempest " an horrible shaped thing " appeared which wrung the necks of several worshippers. Not content with turning the commonplace into the fabulous, the journalists of those times rendered the fabulous familiar. In a word, they gave their public what it wanted. It was an age that believed in miracles, and so even " news " of miracles was provided. Readers opened their news-books to learn of dead bodies rising from the grave, of people recently dead returning to life again, of wrongfully convicted men being hung for days while yet remaining alive, and of maidens fasting for years on a diet of perfume of roses and flowers.

Witchcraft and crime also provided much material for news-stories. Then as now the showing up of evil as a warning was pleaded as moral justification. Dramatic murder cases excited as much popular interest as they do to-day. A special feature was made of the

descriptions of hangings and of the last confessions of the culprits. Much space was devoted to sporting events, particularly to feats, as, for example, rowing over the Thames in a paper-bottomed boat. Sensational titles were given and numerous sub-titles provided. In comparison with these the headings of the yellowest of yellow newspapers of to-day are restrained.

The same style of journalism persisted in England during the greater part of the seventeenth century. Even so late as 1689 we find the following heading in the *True Protestant Mercury* : " News, Rare, New, True News, Delicate, Dreadful, Horrible, Bloody News from France and Ireland, you never heard the like before you were born."

As may be imagined, the Civil War between the King and the Parliament, which produced a tremendous outburst of journalistic energy from both sides, did not make the Press less sensational or improve its manners. The papers of the time are full of mud-slinging and coarse personal abuse. Cromwell is referred to in the Royalist Press as " Copper-Snouted Cromwell," " Fiery-Snout," " Red-Nosed Noll, the ambi-

tious Brewer." As a typical specimen of the newspaper style of that time the opening lines from the Royalist *Mercurus Melancholicus* of March 20, 1648, may be quoted :

The parliament Blood-hounds have almost run themselves quite off their leggs to find out " Melancholicus " and his Brother " Pragg " (" Mercurius Pragmaticus "), but the curre being old and dull-scented are yet at a loss, and must be content to misse of their game ; yet there are amongst them Parliament Bitches too, that hunt damnable close, and as pocky noses, as if they were of Harry Martyne's, or of Miles Corbett's breed yet all won't doe, they can make nothing on't.

All these examples serve to show that sensational journalism is by no means a modern invention imported from America, as some people seem to think, and that whatever faults the Press of to-day may have, its manners at least are vastly better than those of its progenitors.

The term journalist, or newspaperman as it is more popularly called in America, covers a wide range of publicity activity. The essayist whose lucubrations appear from time to time in a weekly or monthly periodical nearly always likes to consider himself, and to be considered,

a journalist. The man who writes leading articles, the special correspondent, the editor, the sub-editor, the reporter, even the individual who takes down messages by telephone—they are all journalists of a sort. That is so in Great Britain and America. On the Continent the term has even a wider meaning, for there nearly every politician is a journalist, with or without emolument.

My definition is more rigid. A journalist is a man who not only follows journalism as a career, but he is one who knows what journalism means. There are hundreds and hundreds of people connected with the Press in Great Britain who call themselves journalists but who are wholly unfitted for the tasks allotted to them. They have not been trained. Many of them are just shorthand writers with a note-book.

The real journalist should firstly be equipped with at least two languages. He should be able to write English correctly. He should know the history of his own country as well as the history of the world. He need not necessarily be a Datas "am-I-right-Sir" sort of performer, but he should certainly not be

embarrassed at having to answer fairly simple questions in geography or modern political history. I have had experience in the conduct of newspapers on both sides of the Atlantic, and I regret to have to put it on record that the percentage of so-called journalists who now presume to think that they assist in directing public opinion, and who are hopelessly unqualified for the job, is appalling in its proportions.

As to editors. The Editor who hopes ever to succeed in the conduct of a great newspaper must certainly be equipped in the manner that I have suggested. There are many essential qualifications, but I shall put them down categorically in the order of their importance.

1. A good sound education. It may be Balliol or board school, but it should be sound.

2. Good health, from which follows good temper. The Editor of to-day has so many responsibilities, so many pulls on his nerve-strings and such demands on his good nature that he must be able to forgo not only meals but sleep. He must dine out and lunch out in order to meet and know people and learn

what they are thinking and saying, so that he himself knows what his paper is writing about. He must be in close touch with Ministers and leaders of the public in all callings. He must at the same time be in closer touch with his own newspaper office, to direct, to guide, to assist or to check the rash impetuosities of ambitious young subordinates. In order to be able to do this he must himself have gone through the various grades from reporter upwards. He must sit patiently in his office and listen respectfully to the importunities of foolish people of importance who cannot be ignored. In other words, he must suffer fools gladly.

3. A technical knowledge of the making of a newspaper. He must know type and how to use it to the best advantage in order to secure the last ounce of emphasis. I know a number of editors, admirable men in many respects, who are quite ignorant of this advantage; who do not know one face of type from another and are consequently at the mercy of their printers and printers' foremen.

4. I put this last because it is the most

important. He should know the difference between news and opinion. That is a gift which comes to men with their mother's milk or even before. The man who is not so gifted should attempt the search of success in another field, for without it he will never make a newspaper, no matter how gifted he may be in other respects. It is difficult to define the distinctions. News comes to some people as inspiration. To others it is only news after it has been officially announced.

I will give you a case in point. I was sitting one night at dinner in a famous London club in company with a friend, the editor of a great newspaper. He was a man of the highest scholarly accomplishments, but he knew little about newspaper-making or the exigencies of news gathering. You see, he had for years been engaged in another profession ; had never been a reporter nor a sub-editor, but had walked straight to the editor's chair, where he was deeply interested in political movements. He had little regard for the actualities of life which, after all, ordain the course of all other activities, political as well.

While we were dining, a great Church dignitary of our acquaintance came to us and showed us a letter from the Empress Marie of Russia, sister of Queen Alexandra, giving full details of the assassination of the Russian royal family. The story was minute and substantial, and coming from such a source was surely authentic. We talked for some time over this tragic fate of Russia's ruling family, and then went off to our respective newspaper tasks.

I made the most of the news on the front page. I was aware, of course, that my colleague was also in possession of the facts and that I was, therefore, not in the happy position of being able to present what is colloquially called "a scoop." But it was news of the highest importance and I was content to share it. My headline type was adequate to the importance of the subject: across three columns, with portraits, descriptions and appropriate obituary notices.

The first thing I did the next morning was to seek my colleague's newspaper to see how he had treated the great news item. I searched the paper end to end. Not a line! I rang him up and asked for an explanation. "Well,

you see," was the astonishing retort, " I never print anything like that unless it is official. I know it is important, but . . ."

So there you have it. If *The Times* of June 1815 had waited for the *Gazette* to appear before printing the news of the Battle of Waterloo, it would not have secured its historic " scoop " of that event. That is the sort of thing that established the position of the world's foremost newspaper.

There is, of course, something—a great deal—to be said for the editor who refuses to publish until he is dead certain, but there is much more to be said for the editor whose instinct for news, coupled with a trained sense of responsibility, impels him to publish information so far ahead as to give the public the impression of enterprise and reliability which is so essential to the success of a newspaper. The success or failure of a publicity business depend almost wholly on the mental pabulum employed by the editorial head. Great success can come only, however, if this editorial acumen is not merely aided but in most cases shared by equally brilliant business management.

Let us now take the case of Lord Northcliffe, whose personality is so definitely stamped in the British newspaper history of the past generation. He succeeded inordinately with the *Daily Mail*, which was a mass-production newspaper. It was largely true that if he did say "Turn!" the majority of *Daily Mail* readers obeyed almost automatically and rolled over. The same applies to the *Daily Express* and kindred popular newspapers. Then Lord Northcliffe went over to Printing House Square and took possession of *The Times*, the "Thunderer," the dreaded Sir Oracle of the Press. Everybody gasped and awaited the revolutionary change.

"I'll show them," said Napoleon. "This old *Times* has been wallowing heavily like a Dutch market boat. I'll cause it to show its paces. Watch me!"

So he issued the order to the readers of the world's greatest newspaper.

"Turn!" he cried in Northcliffian tones. Nothing happened. "Turn! Turn! Turn!" Metaphorically he stamped his foot, shook his fist, uttered terrible threats. "Turn, damn you," appeared to be his last fling, and not a

single reader of *The Times* performed the evolution. They simply would not have it, and Northcliffe gave no more turning orders there.

Actually, in buying *The Times*, Northcliffe had gone beyond his capacity, outside his range, and in his heart he knew it. He purchased it not for commercial ends, but for the power and prestige its possession gave him. But having purchased it, he did not know what to do with it. He talked grandly about making it the "best paper in the world," but what he exactly meant by that he hardly knew himself; still less was he clear in his own mind as to how far it would be necessary to change the traditional character of *The Times* in order to make it the "best paper in the world."

He was quite unfitted both by his character and by his journalistic antecedents to understand the special psychology of *The Times* and of the public it appealed to, and this explains his complete inability to decide on any settled policy in regard to it. He made many technical improvements in the paper, and he "gingered up" the management, but he could not alter its character. He thundered periodical

announcements of the sweeping changes he proposed to make, and these threats shook Printing House Square to its foundations—for Northcliffe threatened in the Napoleonic manner. But he never crystallised his intentions to a clear purpose and his worst threats were never realised. His frequent changes of plan were an affliction to his staff, but they left practically untouched the traditional character of the paper. Wilful and overbearing though he was, Northcliffe was too big a man to set out to destroy when he had no clear plan as to how he could rebuild. At the end of his regime *The Times* was much the same as before, except that it had benefited not a little from the shake-up he gave it.

This difference in newspaper character and temperament here shown fully explains the characteristics of the British Press. On one side we have such papers as *The Times*, the *Morning Post*, the *Birmingham Post*, the *Manchester Guardian*, the *Scotsman*, and the *Yorkshire Post* seemingly imperturbable, unwilling or unable to bow to the newer trend of public action or public thought. On the other hand, we have the so-called Nationals, the *Daily*

Express, the *Daily Herald*, the *News-Chronicle*, the *Daily Mail* all reaching out into new fields, giving their newly-found public a far wider range of subject-matter coupled with news, but with the news mostly dramatised, made more palatable, yet still real undisguised news.

And yet the older papers, the "heavies," bear no resemblance to their former selves. When I first came into Fleet Street in 1887, the morning papers were great heavy-sided blanket sheets full of dull advertisements and duller news announcements. They all looked alike and all were equally heavy. News was classified into foreign politics, foreign correspondence, railway and ship wrecks, long reports of trials, verbatim almost, and an utter absence of information that gave the reader any idea of what people throughout the world were doing outside the confines of their various parliament houses.

The Times was pontifical ; the *Morning Post* snobbish, with information about duchesses and advertisements about butlers ; the *Standard* was commercial ; the *Daily News* purely literary and what is now called "high-brow" ; and the *Daily Telegraph* just a trifle vulgar because

it printed things which others did not—"London Day by Day," as it were.

Yet here was London, the greatest news centre in the world, and no one had the enterprise to gather the news and present it attractively and correctly. Parenthetically I might add that London is still the greatest news centre in the world and that it is still the worst garnered news harvest. A free-lance journalist with a quick wit, a knowledge of his calling, a good address and a properly working fountain pen should have no difficulty in making a good living by walking about London for a few hours each day. There will be no end of contradiction to this statement on the part of free-lance journalists. My reply will be that the protesters may be free-lances but they are not journalists.

The Victorian newspapers were also impersonal and anonymous. Few people knew the names of those who edited the leading papers or who were the principal contributors. Signatures did not appear and there were few special articles. If there were they were for the most part unsigned. There was a form of personal journalism which was conducted in the weekly press by Labouchère in *Truth*,

Edmund Yates in the *World* and "Tommy" Bowles in *Vanity Fair*. They were weekly papers of opinion and they had great power. But you never heard the name of the Editor of the *Morning Post* or of the *Standard*, though such public performers as George Augustus Sala and George R. Sims flourished in a great flood of publicity sunshine as representative of the then modern journalism. They were the Hannen Swaffers of that day.

For the rest, at that time in 1887 the British Press, with the exception of the *Daily Telegraph*, was seemingly hopelessly bogged. The editors sat in their water-tight compartments resolutely refusing to see and be seen. The reporters were strange, weird people in frock-coats with note-books and utterly devoid of originality and enterprise, due, of course, to the policy of the Press of the time.

This policy was sternly to suppress any kind of innovation in the form or character of a newspaper. Any unconventional feature, anything which tended to brighten a paper, to lighten its character or render it more amusing, was frowned on as vulgar and "contrary to the best traditions of English journalism." There

were no topical articles, no magazine or home page, and not a gleam of humour. Only the *Daily Telegraph* seemed to think that its readers might want to be amused as well as instructed, and here the humour was necessarily elemental.

The other great daily newspapers made no attempt to establish human relations with their readers, to gossip with them, as it were, to touch them on the side of their broad and universal humanity. They remained rigidly political, uniformly serious, ponderously respectable. The "interview" started by Stead in the *Pall Mall* shocked all the journalistic proprieties, and was universally condemned as rank bad taste. Moreover, respectability demanded not only that a newspaper *be* dull, but that it *look* dull as well. *The Times* sternly refused to follow Stead in using cross-heads; it continued to fill column after column with verbatim reports of parliamentary speeches without introducing a single cross-head to help the reader on his way through the endless Sahara of monotonous news-print. And the other morning newspapers which took their standard of journalistic propriety from *The Times* were equally reluctant to accept the

innovation. With such a spirit prevailing in editorial offices, it is small wonder that reporters as a body were unoriginal and lethargic.

It did not seem possible that there could ever be a change. Newspaper reading, indeed, was not fashionable for the reason that the vast majority of people did not read newspapers. This vast majority was barely literate. At about this time success was achieved by George Newnes with *Tit-Bits*, which began to appeal to the first crop of the Forster Education Act of 1870. This Act entailed forcible education, and the people who had thus to be "educated," willy-nilly, were about ready for light reading. Newnes supplied the want. Then followed Harmsworth with *Answers* and Pearson with his *Pearson's Weekly*. The appetite growing on the stuff it feeds on demanded daily food. Thus came into being the *Morning Leader*, the *Morning*, the *Daily Mail* and later the *Daily Express* for a halfpenny, and with them came the new era in British journalism.

The late Mr. W. T. Stead—who went down in the *Titanic*—was largely responsible for the changes that were coming over the world's Press. Stead was editor of the *Pall Mall*

Gazette. He looked upon himself in the light of a crusader. He was virile and courageous and he was one of the first journalists, following Dickens and Charles Reade, to enter on exposure campaigns by calling public attention to certain public evils. The late Lord Milner described Stead as "a compound of Don Quixote and Barnum." The description is apt. Stead was honest, but he was unbalanced and histrionic; and he was the king of exaggerators. Every pin-hole was a cavern, every beetle a great juggernaut. He said he had to beat the big drum in order to be heard, and he did not mind going into the dock to face judge and jury; which he did. His methods were frowned upon by his rivals. The *Globe* was correct and semi-official; the *St. James's Gazette* was still preening itself on having, under Greenwood, secured control of the Suez Canal shares, and the *Evening Standard* was the pancake-like fountain-head of City information.

There was T. P. O'Connor's new *Star* foreshadowing the present fashion of gossip and talk about people, and one or two other evening papers like the *Echo* and the *Evening News*; but the *Pall Mall* under Stead was the beacon

light showing the way to campaigns, special series, exposures, and personal journalism.

The struggle went on for several years between the old and the new, and the old fought heroically and gave way nowhere. I was London correspondent of the *New York Herald*, then one of the world's greatest newspapers. We too, on our part, had fought valiantly against innovations. Our advertisements were conservative. There was no display type. Not even a line drawing had ever desecrated our columns. Our news pages were sacrosanct. No advertisement was permitted to rear its ugly head on the sacred pages employed in imparting news and opinions, each, be it stated, strictly in its proper place.

Then one day we printed a picture. It was not much of a picture. Just a woodcut. When the paper reached London I showed the curiosity to Mr. Moberley Bell, who was then the manager of *The Times*, Cabinet Minister-cum-Archbishop sort of official who frowned on princes and caused them to tremble.

"Good God!" cried Bell. "Pictures! Well, I always knew that Bennett (James Gordon Bennett, owner of the *New York Herald*)

had a Radical twist. There's another great newspaper gone ! ”

He put the *Herald* down firmly as if to say, “ Away with such rubbish.”

“ Well, Mr. Bell,” I said, “ I thought I would just show you what *The Times* will be coming to. You are not entirely guiltless, for *The Times* printed a picture fifty years ago, and you will again not only print pictures but you will have display advertisements and extra supplements.”

I felt that the tyrant would burst. He hammered his desk and cried, “ Don't be a fool. *The Times* with pictures ? *The Times* with display ? *The Times* with supplements ? ” . . .

Look at it now. Still the leading journal, with excellent pictures, first-rate display type and quite interesting supplements. They have all had to change.

At the time of which I have been writing the Continental Press was even in a worse state. There was practically no Press in France outside Paris. An enterprising speculator with an English name, Edwards, was running the new *Matin* rather sensationally against old Monsieur Marinoni's *Petit Journal* ; the *Petit Parisien* was coming along fast and the *Journal*

following. Their principal claim to circulation was the daily *Feuilleton*, a serial story. As for news, *niente* ! They simply had nothing that was under twenty-four hours old, and as they were all principally political in their foundation their reliability was none too good.

Germany was in a still worse state. The *Frankfurter Zeitung* was a sound financial organ ; the *Cologne Gazette* a semi-official pronouncement and the Berlin Press beneath notice. They, too, paid homage to information that was ancient but honourable. Indeed, throughout the Continent of Europe the Press was unenterprising, poor in make-up as well as in every other respect. The great chancelleries of Berlin, Vienna, Rome and Madrid secured their world news from the *Standard* and *The Times*.

In America there was also a transformation. The personal journalism of the elder Bennett, of Dana, Jones and Wilbur F. Story, with their adjectival assaults and long political harangues, had given way to the sensationalism of Joseph Pulitzer of the *World* and his brother Albert of the *Journal*. The invective of post-war days was followed by a cyclone of sensationalism such as the world had never experienced.

Then came Mr. Hearst from California to New York and regularised the position. Mr. Pulitzer was the founder of so-called "yellow" journalism. Mr. Hearst, with characteristic enterprise presenting the first comic coloured strips with a popular character called "The Yellow Kid," provided the name. "Yellow" journalism it became. It was a fast and furious fight, often reaching beyond the borders of good form yet never indecent. The United States were just then undergoing the process of trying to digest the vast hordes of untutored immigrants from the steppes of Russia, the slums of Poland and the alley-ways of Naples, and it was not possible to help them by giving them the classics to read. So they had to have "Yellow Kids" and their like until they had become acclimatised.

That yellow streak in American journalism has now disappeared. I think there is little chance of my being contradicted if I say that "by and large" the American Press is to-day more informative, better displayed and less irregular in its mannerisms than, say, the British Press, which in its new phase is seemingly trying to find itself.

CHAPTER II

NEWSPAPERS AND PUBLIC OPINION

It would be wrong to say that newspapers do not influence public opinion ; just as wrong as to say that newspapers are not themselves influenced by public opinion. Indeed it would be best to maintain that they have equal effect on each other.

Influencing public opinion, however, is not the same thing as frightening it. It is always possible for a newspaper to give the public a sort of electric shock and cause an ephemeral panic. This has sometimes been done by newspaper proprietors who have been momentarily intoxicated by their sense of power.

I am reminded of a hoax once perpetrated on the New York public by James Gordon Bennett. This remarkable man suffered from the same complex as Northcliffe. He believed he could make the public do what he liked. So one night about sixty years ago, in order to prove his power, he told his friends that he would see to it that all the people of New York remained in their homes for the whole of the following day. The next morning the *New York Herald*, which

he published, came out with the terrifying news that all the wild animals had broken loose from the Zoo and were prowling about the city.

The public terror may be imagined. No one dared to venture abroad; the schools were ordered to be closed, and New York for some hours was almost a dead city. Those who had to leave their houses went in terror of their lives. A dog's bark became a lion's roar, and a cat slinking along the wall became a leopard on the watch for human prey. The hoax was a good one. Bennett gave the public a huge fright. But as soon as the truth leaked out, public calm was at once restored, and life went on its usual way.

AWFUL CALAMITY

THE WILD ANIMALS BROKEN LOOSE

TERRIBLE SCENES OF MUTILATION

A SHOCKING SABBATH CARNIVAL OF DEATH

(The New York Herald's great Zoo scare.)

Incidentally, this eccentric delight in showing his power was one of Bennett's little weaknesses. Other great newspaper proprietors have had the same failing. In Bennett's case, however, it was allied to a freakish sense of humour, which some of the others—Northcliffe, for example—have not possessed.

Once, early in the 'nineties, the Editor of the Paris edition of the *New York Herald* inadvertently printed in two successive issues a "spoof" letter signed "An Old Philadelphia Lady" who professed to be puzzled about the difference between Fahrenheit and Centigrade. Mr. Bennett, who never had any patience with carelessness, exploded in wrath. He sent for the Editor and told him that since he attached so much importance to that particular letter, he had better print it in every succeeding issue of the paper. The editor expostulated in vain. The letter from "An Old Philadelphia Lady" duly appeared on the Leader page in every number of the Paris *Herald* until Bennett's death some twenty years later.

I have always maintained that newspapers reflect a general state of mind. They may, perhaps, mould it and direct it, but actually

the public mind must first be ripe for moulding and directing. The moulding process may, indeed, have been due to newspaper agitation, suggestion, argument, repetition or misrepresentation over a long period of time, but even then the public mind must have been receptive for such expositions.

We must first of all understand that in order to build a strong structure of public opinion there must be unanimity of thought in the newspapers, and there is no such thing except in the state-controlled and censored Press of Russia, Germany and Italy. There the Press appears to direct public opinion just as the man with the megaphone directs a crowd, but it has no permanent character, no lasting effect. So underneath this apparent unanimity of thought as expressed by the shackled Press, there is invariably independence of view which will sooner or later break out in opposition.

We hear it said that newspapers can and do make wars. They do not. It would be more true to say that wars have made newspapers. This has, in fact, been the case. In time of war, people clamour for news. They have friends and relatives fighting, their vital interests

are affected by the fluctuations in the fortune of the war, and they are eager for every scrap of information they can get about the battles and sieges and other sensational happenings. Hence wars have always given a great impetus to newspaper development.

It was during the Napoleonic wars that *The Times* established itself as a great national newspaper, and the same period witnessed a great outburst of journalistic energy in the continental countries that were at war. Popular journalism in America was born during the War of Independence. The halfpenny newspaper in England was successfully launched on the tide of excitement raised by the troubles in South Africa. During the Great War circulations went up in great leaps in spite of paper shortage and other handicaps. The mammoth circulations of to-day are partly the result of stimulus given to newspaper reading during the War. Instances could be multiplied from the newspaper history of every country. Indeed, the influence of wars and revolutions on the making of newspapers is an important chapter in the history of journalism.

The reverse, however, is not true. The idea

that newspapers make wars is an illusion. For example, it has frequently been said that it was Mr. Hearst's New York *American* which drove the United States into war with Spain in 1898. Further, this incident has constantly been held up to Mr. Hearst as a reprehensible act and as an abuse of the high privileges of journalism. Now it is certain that the Spanish-American War would have taken place if there had never been such a live newspaper as the *American*. The revolt in Cuba was not a ten-day affair. It had been going on for years and it is, indeed, still going on in one form or another and would perhaps have not flared up but for their bad manners in sinking the American battle-cruiser *Texas* in Havana harbour. That at once focussed American public opinion on the situation. The newspapers expressed public opinion in its various degrees of indignation; Mr. Hearst's paper with, perhaps, a more vigorous and picturesque enterprise than the rest. The country was determined to be avenged, and when the *American* shouted for war, the Eagle sat up and screamed in the affirmative. Which proves that the newspapers can and do emphasise a condition, accelerate its

operations and direct its course, after it has shown itself to be ready for the directing process.

Mass thinking is a strange and unaccountable affair. It is a dangerous weapon in the hands of dangerous people. It all depends on the degree of influence possessed by a publication, how far it can or will impress itself on the thinking process of the people at large. I have seen it attempted dozens of times.

Many will remember how at the beginning of the century the Liberal newspapers almost hypnotised a large section of the public into the belief that if tariffs were imposed on any kind of foreign goods, the British working man would starve. During the Chamberlain campaign of 1903-6, the Liberals suggested through their papers, the *Daily News* and the *Morning Leader*, which have now been amalgamated, that tariffs would bankrupt England. We who believed in Tariff Reform produced, by means of constant iteration and reiteration, mass thinking on our side.

Joseph Chamberlain said to me one day: "If you can only make working men understand that tariffs will give them more work, you will have done the trick."

I then invented the famous slogan, "Tariff Reform Means Work for All." We flaunted it day after day, week after week on the front page of the *Daily Express*. It was assailed as if it were a deadly plague. It focussed opinion, more than all the political speeches, on the point at issue. But it took thirty years before we got any kind of Tariff worth talking about. Nor are there evidences of working families undergoing starvation in consequence.

The late Alfred Harmsworth, Lord Northcliffe, had great success in leading masses of people into channels of minor action, such, for instance, as suddenly beginning the cultivation of peas and roses. He dominated a multi-million circulation of all sorts of periodicals, and his influence in minor matters was undoubted and instantaneous. But when Northcliffe and his Press essayed on more important matters, such as international affairs and wars, the influence so sought was not always so marked. Lord Northcliffe once said to me :

"There is no doubt of our power over the public. We can cause the whole country to think with us overnight whenever we say the word."

The fallacy of this contention was shown over and over again in the Great War. Northcliffe was by that time the King of Fleet Street. He controlled *The Times* as well as the *Daily Mail*, yet he never succeeded in what he set out to do, namely, overthrow one government and substitute another with, or without himself in it. His power, however, was enormous; the influence of this particular Press was equally great, but it was never so great as to run ahead of public opinion, which at the psychological moment invariably called a halt.

The limits of Northcliffe's power were clearly seen during the War when he launched his attack on Kitchener, the popular idol. The organised efforts of the Northcliffe Press to discredit him completely failed of their effect. Popular indignation was aroused against Northcliffe, and the *Daily Mail* lost heavily at the time. It was burned on the Stock Exchange, but this burning proved in the end a good thing, for when it was found that Northcliffe was right and Kitchener was wrong, the conflagration merely served to advertise the *Daily Mail's* prescience.

The power of the Press has become strength-

ened and consolidated. Whereas before it influenced thousands, it now influences millions. This influence became directed over the heads of governments, parties and other interests ; it is ubiquitous, piercing and direct, reaching the individual at home, in the office, the restaurant, the café, the street. Nor is there any mystery as to its source. This source is the proprietor and his advisers. The result is a tremendous radiation of personal will-force. Here one reservation needs to be made : the Press leads, but in turn is led itself. If readers do not like a newspaper they cease to read it and to advertise in it, and soon the enterprise perishes.

A great journalist having forfeited popular favour finds it almost impossible to recover it again. Thus, if newspaper proprietors exercise great power, it is their readers who confer it upon them ; in a sense they are constitutional monarchs. If there is danger in this circumstance, it is the danger of inherent democracy.

Hence—and this is a point I should like to emphasise as strongly as I can—when people use the term “ dictatorship of the Press ” in speaking of the power of the popular newspaper in England and America, they are wide of the mark.

In a country where the Press is free and has become completely democratised, a dictatorship of the Press is a practical impossibility. Not only is this so, but, paradoxical though it may seem, the Press exercises less direct power to-day than it did fifty to a hundred years ago, before it became popularised. By power I do not mean influence. The influence of the Press, its effectiveness as an instrument for instructing, stimulating, moulding public opinion, is greater to-day than it has ever been; because newspapers are read by vastly more people, the character of their appeal is infinitely wider and more varied, and they enjoy far greater facilities for meeting the requirements of the public. But the same thing cannot be said of the power of the Press, of its ability to do things or get them done, to direct policy, to force the hand of the Government, to make and unmake ministries. This power began to diminish with the development of the Press as a great popular institution.

No modern newspaper possesses anything like the political power exercised by *The Times* under the great editorship of Delane during the middle years of the last century; and even the other

leading newspapers of that time, though dwarfed by *The Times*, possessed more direct power than is possessed by their present-day successors. The newspapers of those days were conducted as political party organs and nothing else. They were written for the governing classes and read almost exclusively by them. Circulations were small in the eighteen-fifties. *The Times* with a circulation of 60,000 had more than three times as many readers as the five other chief London newspapers together. Compare this with the 2,000,000 circulations of to-day.

But this small newspaper public consisted of the people who counted in the country. Each newspaper depended for its circulation on the small but solid and educated body of readers, whose political opinions it represented, and who looked to it for authoritative guidance on the important questions of the day. Editors were the official links between the Party leaders and their supporters in the country. It was generally believed that the leading articles were inspired or even written by prominent politicians. In these circumstances the direct power wielded by the Press was necessarily considerable.

With the advent of the penny newspaper in

1856, the direct political power of the Press began steadily to decline. When in that year the *Daily Telegraph* offered to give its readers “*The Times* for a penny,” it revolutionised the whole character of British journalism. The newspaper ceased to be written for a small privileged class. It aimed at a wide circulation among the masses of the community. It became less and less a political organ, and more and more a news and topical journal calculated to appeal to the tastes and interests of the large democratic public. As a result it began to lose its semi-official character, and with it its political authority.

No one can pretend that the newspaper public of to-day is a political public. The multi-million readers of this or that great newspaper do not constitute a solid and united body of political opinion. On the contrary, they represent every grade and variety of opinion. Numbers of them care little or nothing about the politics of their favourite newspaper, or may even be opposed to them. They take it for a variety of reasons into which politics do not enter. Large numbers buy them merely

for the sake of their prize coupons, a pernicious system which the newspapers themselves deplore and of which I shall presently have something to say.

Not all the readers of the *Daily Herald* are Socialists, or want to see a Labour Government in power, any more than all the readers of the *Daily Express* endorse the policies of that paper ; and there is probably a fair sprinkling of Socialists even among the readers of such a comparatively exclusive class organ as the *Morning Post*.

People no longer believe that the leading articles they read in the newspapers—even those in *The Times*—are in any sense official or inspired. Each newspaper has its pet policy and slogan, which it shouts at the top of its voice and claims to be the *vox populi*. But the various shoutings contradict each other and cancel each other out. In fact, the *vox populi* speaks through the Press in so many different tongues that it passes the wit of man—and of most Governments—to understand what it is saying at any given moment. Clearly to talk about the dictatorship of the Press in such a state of affairs is sheer nonsense. “

A good illustration of the difference between the power of and the influence of the Press was afforded by Lord Beaverbrook's Empire Free Trade campaign. He used his newspapers with consummate skill to put this policy before the public and to preach it. The influence of this Press campaign was enormous. The public interest was awakened. Millions of people who had never given a thought to the subject before, became interested, began to study it and discuss it. Empire Free Trade became the burning question of the hour.

But when Lord Beaverbrook tried to use his Press as an instrument of government, when he used it to try to force his policy on the Conservative Party and to unseat its leader, he failed. There were many reasons unconnected with the merits of Lord Beaverbrook's plan which hampered him and checked him. He may still triumph, and he probably will—I sincerely hope so—but for the moment he can merely "report progress."

As a general principle, however, it may be said that the Press can influence to an almost unlimited extent, but that it cannot command.

Does the modern newspaper give the public

what it wants? The popularisation of the Press was possible because the masses had learned to read and write. Are these masses now learning to think? Are their interests becoming more intelligent than those of the composite reader whom the journalists always have in mind?

The British newspaper has attained high technical excellence. The more successful journals are unrivalled for the artistry of their make-up and the general tidiness of their appearance. At first glance they carry swiftly—instantaneously—an impression of brightness. But their content is less satisfying. In less than an hour they can be read from end to end, and the majority of them leave but little enduring impression upon the mind. The “snippety” character they inherit from *Tit-Bits*, the progenitor of bright, popular journalism, is still too much in evidence.

It is related of an Oxford don who picked up an early copy of *Tit-Bits*, that, on being asked by his colleagues what he thought of it, he replied that it “seemed to him somehow disconnected.” This donnish remark hits the nail on the head, and is almost equally applicable to the modern newspaper. Its compressed versions

of all kinds of news, its tabloid articles on a host of different topics, and the sundry announcements and picture advertisements with which they are interspersed, create an impression of "disconnectedness," and leave the reader bewildered and unsatisfied. He hops from one subject to another, concentrates on nothing, and at the end probably forgets everything he has read.

Although each newspaper has a marked individuality of its own, yet all bear the brand of sameness. This sameness arises from the fact that improvements are largely technical or professional in character, and therefore easy to imitate, and from a too-ready acceptance of a common devaluation of public taste and intelligence. Newspapers of greater pretentiousness, as, for example, *The Times* and the *Morning Post*, have been much influenced by the progressive spirit of the popular Press; but they have not reached, nor apparently do they desire to reach, its technical excellence. They are much lighter and brighter than their forbears, but they still have one foot in the last century.

It is true that *The Times* is in a category by itself. If it has a wider appeal than ever, it is

because a large and growing section of the public is still willing to tolerate a measure of dullness. But even *The Times* has an inclination for modernisation, though it keeps this well under restraint, and has not, as yet, lost faith in the belief that to look important one must look dowdy, and to write "importantly" one must write heavily.

I got my first really serious lesson in the value of sometimes "writing down" to the public from no less a person than the late Mr. Gladstone. He was a first-class Statesman, which, to my mind, always appeared to be synonymous with Journalist and, shall we say, "Showman"? In other words, to be excellent in all three callings you must know your public.

It was in my youthful days as a London correspondent. Mr. Gladstone was deeply immersed in his Home Rule campaign. We of the *New York Herald* were his staunch supporters. Nearly every one of the *Herald's* executives was an exiled "patriot" from Ireland—Clancy, O'Donovan Rossa, J. J. C. Clarke, Tynan, Devoy and so on—and as the *Herald* was the leading American paper, the Grand Old

Man naturally favoured it. So I had the run of Downing Street.

I frequently took my proposed cables to Mr. Gladstone for his guidance and approval. There was a famine in Ireland in 1890. The potatoes were small, like plovers' eggs, and none too nutritious. Potatoes were what the Irish peasants lived on in those days. I had just been over in the "disthressful Isle" looking at the famine and distributing money through the local priests; money to the extent of £20,000 collected in America from Irish cooks and housemaids; and I had written an account of my experiences, adding at the end that more money was required.

Mr. Gladstone read over my manuscript. He took up a quill pen and ran lines through some of my choice paragraphs.

"Not good enough, my lad," he said. "Write down, write down, write down to your public. Make their hearts sad. Lay it on. This is too sober. Your people want to be harassed with this dreadful tale, and you are too gentle. Remember this, if you want your public to do what you want, you must get down off the platform and mingle with the crowd."

That, I think, epitomises the story of mass thinking and mass suggestion. I need only add that with the help of Mr. Gladstone and Mr., later Lord, Rendle, his friend and adviser, I concocted a truthful but highly gingered cable about the famine from Valencia to Achill, and that every Irish housemaid and cook and policeman in the free United States "wept copiously" and sent more money for famine relief.

See now the value of presentation. Mr. Gladstone's firm belief was that under-statement was far worse than over-emphasis; and in general I agree. Take the now celebrated Jutland Battle despatch written by Mr. Balfour on the day after the great contest between the British and German main fleets. Mr. Balfour was First Lord of the Admiralty. He was certainly no journalist, for the despatch unwittingly gave the impression that the British had suffered a great reverse. It was worded carefully, meticulously, emphasising the British losses. Mr. Balfour said he did not believe in "keeping things back."

I was in my newspaper office in Fleet Street when this Admiralty communiqué was brought to my desk, and I saw at once the amateur hand

in the phrasing of this astonishing message. I rang up the Admiralty and asked the Chief Naval Censor if it was not possible to alter the phraseology, but it was then too late. That despatch acted like a message of despair to millions of people, and it was not until the next day that the true facts were known. Here was an unintentional attempt to use the Press for the dissemination of depressing news.

Now let us take an instance of deliberate use of the powers of the Press to create alarm and, through it, cause action. When the British Army under Sir John French was hammered so heavily by von Kluck in August 1914, Colonel Repington, *The Times* correspondent, wrote a despatch in which the truth was revealed so far as it was possible to tell it. Lord Kitchener had put a ban on Press correspondents. Whenever they were caught in or near the lines they were arrested and locked up or sent home.

In London sat Sir Frederick Smith, "F. E.," later Lord Birkenhead. He was Chief Censor. He was alarmed at the situation; wanted to arouse the public to the danger of the situation; and so, like General Buller in the Boer War, he "spatchcocked," *i.e.* interpolated into *The Times*

despatch as it was presented for censorship, some lines describing the practical destruction of the little British Army—"would to God" sort of stuff. It had its effect; it roused the War Office and the public as well, but it nearly unhorsed "Gallop" Smith.

All of this, of course, proves the value of the Press for propaganda purposes. That is just advertising. The Press, however, has propaganda value which may be termed preventive. While in large questions it does not control public opinion, it does serve to check, to guide and even to divert its course, and many a politician has found his pet schemes baulked and defeated by a watchful Press; which again proves that without a free Press and our untrammelled right of criticism there can be no liberty.

A case in point. When Mr. Lloyd George was Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1915 he had a Quixotic idea of confiscating the Drink Trade of Great Britain. It was to cost no less than £300,000,000, but then a few ciphers more or less made no difference at that time. The thing was worked out in secret to the last drop of gin, and was ready to be launched. It was

to have been sprung quickly on an unsuspecting, hampered and more or less muzzled Parliament.

An anonymous document came to me overnight. It was the L. G. Drink Confiscation Scheme, so detailed and so circumstantial that I had no possible reason to doubt it. Here is where journalistic experience came in. Training, second-sight, intuition or whatever you may call it, led me to accept its authenticity. I "plunged" on it as editors sometimes must. We printed it the next morning—large type, emphasis, big headlines and all—calling attention to the Great Prohibition Plot, for that is what it came to.

Mr. Lloyd George performed a million gyrations. He accused all of my influential friends, Bonar Law, Beaverbrook, Carson, Birkenhead—all of them in turn—of having betrayed that secret, and finally I determined to go and see him at the Treasury, and lift, if possible, the weight of suspicion that rested on my friends. L. G. said sadly, "You have ruined my plans by your premature publication." I do not think he ever believed that I was telling the truth by saying the communication was anonymous.

But I think that was a good day's work.

How much credence would an average person give to statements to-day, say in the *Daily Telegraph* of London or the New York *American*, if it were known that over the editor was standing a Hitlerite censor armed with blue pencil and powers of suppression and even of arrest? None. Yet that is what they do in Germany to-day, as in Russia. Herr Hitler thinks childishly that the Press can be superseded by daily and nightly harangues over the radio circuits. Turn your wireless machine direction-finder right, left, right, left, on any evening, and nearly all the burden of continental talk is insensate Hitlerite propaganda about "Deutschland über Alles" and the aggrandisement of Germanism. The air is full of it.

Yet it makes no great impression on the general listener; not nearly so much as a leading article in the formerly uncensored Berlin Press. The fact is, radio with all its marvels depends on the spoken word, and the spoken word can never, never hope to replace the written or printed word. That is human nature. We like to hear things, but we really do not believe them until we have seen them substantiated,

confirmed in print. So we turn on our radio machine, listen to the nine o'clock news bulletin, hear all the essential news and then wait for the morning eagerly to grasp the newspaper in order to confirm what we heard the previous evening.

Many newspaper proprietors appear to be afraid of the radio and its "news." I take the opposite view, in that I am convinced that newspapers have no greater ally and "feeder" than the broadcasting industry. I would even supply them with later news in order to let them develop the public's taste for newspaper reading.

Newspaper proprietors have more reason to fear the competition of the radio in another direction. I refer to the use of broadcasting as a medium of advertisement. In America, where broadcasting is conducted by private organisations, there are no restrictions on its activities in this respect. These organisations sell time to business firms for publicity use, just as newspapers sell space. The listener turns on his wireless and is informed that he is now going to hear half an hour or an hour's programme of music arranged by Blank and Blank, makers of the world-renowned black pill, which

is guaranteed to cure all the digestive troubles that the human body is heir to. The concert may be, and usually is, first-rate, and perhaps nothing is said, either before or after it, about the various miraculous properties possessed by the famous pills ; but the firm's announcement has been made and vast publicity has been achieved.

Newspaper proprietors naturally regard this publicity over the air as a dangerous attack on their prerogatives. The radio public is nationwide, and may even be world-wide ; in any case it is infinitely larger than the public that any newspaper or group of newspapers can hope to reach. Hence newspapers with large circulations, which depend for their existence on their advertisement revenue, have every reason to be alarmed at this new form of competition.

In England, where broadcasting has been developed on different lines and the B.B.C. is forbidden by its constitution to "sell time" to private interests of any kind, the Press has not yet had to contend with this danger. But it is always there. Even now, a little piece of private advertisement occasionally—and of course inadvertently—leaks through.

This was illustrated in the summer of 1933, when Captain R. C. Lyle, who annually describes the Derby for the B.B.C., inadvertently but picturesquely advertised a famous gin without knowing that he was giving away a thousand pounds' worth of publicity.

"The horses," he shouted into the microphone, "have just passed ——'s Gin sign." Later he said he could not distinguish the leaders because again they were "obscured by ——'s Gin sign"!

There was no end of a hullabaloo about this in the form of protests to the B.B.C. authorities, and poor Lyle was really bewildered about it. He could not understand for a long time what a terrible thing he had done. They heard this gin advertisement all over the world.

We may be quite sure that any change in the policy of the B.B.C. in regard to advertising would meet with the determined opposition of the whole British Press, and, I think, rightly. But this and other matters affecting the relations between broadcasting and the Press I will presently discuss more fully.

CHAPTER III

WITHIN THE WALLS

THE vast public which reads its millions of newspapers every day knows nothing of the mechanism which produces them. It has no knowledge of the great complex machine, mental and physical, which works incessantly during the twenty-four hours of each day in order to present in type what is known as the daily press.

There is less anonymity to-day than there has been in preceding generations, yet it is certain that by the vast number of people to whom their newspaper is a guide and friend, the name of its Editor is unknown.

The machinery of newspaper-making grows apace year by year. There are more people at work; more machines in operation; a far greater amount of money gained or lost.

The office of a great newspaper, like that of any other important undertaking, consists of many floors, many rooms, many departments—editorial, commercial, mechanical. When I first undertook the editing of the *Daily Express* some thirty-two years ago, the entire roster of

employees of all descriptions was about 350, all housed comfortably in nice little cubicle rooms in Tudor-street. To-day the organisation has on its pay list over 3,000 people in London, Manchester and Glasgow, all engaged in the same triplicate issue. The cubicles have gone. Each department performs its task in vast open floor areas with as few partitions as possible. The editorial room of the average modern newspaper recalls the great lecture halls of the universities, packed with desks, with no opportunity for pleasant little tea-party visits in private offices as of old.

With one or two exceptions, the metropolitan newspapers, and for that matter the principal provincial ones, are equipped in the modern fashion. Their methods of procedure differ, of course, in relation to their policy. Thus, for instance, *The Times* staff is differently managed from that of the *Daily Mail* and its sister "nationals," but even the *Morning Post* and the *Daily Telegraph* have gradually made concessions to modernity. So much so that one staff could be transferred to another paper and in a few hours acquit itself as though it had never been anywhere else. That speaks

much for the perfection of newspaper organisation.

At the editorial head of each of the great papers stands the Editor, who, rightly or wrongly, is supposed to be responsible for all that appears or does not appear in his paper. There may be behind him a proprietor or a group of owners who themselves lay down the policy to which he must rigidly conform and even give him his line of country day by day. That is more or less the case now. Gone are the days when the Editor was the oracle whom no one in or out of the office denied the right to print or omit what seemed best to him. When Delane was Editor of *The Times* he thundered pretty well as he chose. There was behind him, of course, the traditional Walter backing, but Delane was the final authority and his was the policy that kept *The Times* in the forefront of journalism. Greenwood was the undisputed "boss" of the *St. James's Gazette*; Stead never took orders from anyone; Sir E. T. Cook resigned his position on the *Pall Mall* rather than take instructions from his owner; Mr. Mudford reigned like an Eastern potentate over the destinies of the *Morning*

Standard, one of the most powerful papers of its kind, and I distinctly remember my friend, Mr. H. A. Gwynne, who has been Editor of the *Morning Post* for twenty years, informing the late Lord Dalziel, on the latter becoming the financial head of the *Standard*, that his place was in the Board Room and not in the Editorial Department of which he (Gwynne) was then the head. You do that now to any of your newspaper potentates and you'll take an indefinite holiday with, of course, a large but final cheque to compensate you for your enforced departure.

The office of Editor, as I have said before, has become complex. There has been so much development that one man can hardly manage to handle the vast machine honeycombed with detail. Where formerly, when I began, there was only one Editor, there are to-day almost a dozen, each vested with great power. There is the Assistant Editor, the Managing Editor (which is a misnomer, for he is really the chief of staff), the News Editor, the Night Editor, the Literary Editor, the Feature Editor, the Gossip Editor—Heaven knows how many others. Everybody in a newspaper office nowadays is

some sort of an Editor. In Brixton, where they breed a peculiar type of journalist called sub-editors (that is where most of them live owing to the facilities of home-getting at night), their wives are all certain that their one particular husband is the Editor of the "Daily W." or whatever it is called. But that is not new. It has always been so. I remember many years ago we had a bright young Irish lad as a tape-boy in the news-room of the *New York Herald*, by name of Gerald Fitzgerald. No doubt he took home grandiloquent tales of his brilliant position, for once I had the pleasure of meeting his hard-working char mother on a river steamboat, and she confided to me with pride that "my son Gurruld is the Iditor av the 'Hurruld.'"

All these London *bona-fide* departmental Editors are naturally under the Editor-in-Chief and have access to him. It has not always been so. I recall the case of Mr. Byron Curtis, the august and personally kindly Editor of the *Standard*, Mr. Mudford's successor, who was as inaccessible to the staff as was the Dalai Lama. He used to come down to the Shoe Lane office after lunch and sit in his heavily

guarded sanctum, write a few letters in his own hand to Cabinet Ministers and Bishops (the *Standard* was largely read by the clergy) and then go off to his Club in Pall Mall for tea. If you had an idea to offer you went to his room at your peril. The idea of offering ideas! In the evening after dinner he came down, talked to his leader writers, waited to see the proofs of the leaders and took the 12.20 train from Blackfriars. Did the French republic blow up or was there likely to be some grave news later in the night, he took the 12.20 just the same, and the efficient Night Editor did the rest.

The multiplication of departments has increased rather than diminished the importance of the Editor-in-Chief. Not less a captain than was the Editor of the nineteenth century, the enterprise which he commands is gigantesque compared with the newspaper organisation of fifty years ago. To describe his functions in detail would require much space. He is the master-artist of journalism, chief constructor and chief critic. A newspaper covers life in its entirety. A good Editor, as I have stated previously, should therefore be a man of know-

ledge and culture. He should have had experience in all branches of his craft, and should know a good deal about typography and mechanics of the newspaper. He should also be a judge of men and women, for he must ensure that his paper appeals to millions of both sexes, and must handle a staff which is engaged in a temperamental calling and depends very much upon his counsel and criticism. If an Editor has long been in control of a paper it is his creation, for it is his spirit which is in it and in those who work upon it, and it is his taste and his feeling which give it aspect and individuality. He must, of course, harmonise with his proprietors. If he did not he would not be where he is. Together these two, in consultation with the writers of leading articles, determine day-to-day trend of policy. The policy of the paper is what it thinks on matters of public interest. It is the expression of its mind, the test of its intelligence and honesty.

Few people know the men who are at the Editorial head of the great London Press. Always take first *The Times*. There are various reasons for this ; principally because it is *The*

Times, and beyond that there is no reason to question its supremacy.

Following a long line of really distinguished journalists there is to-day as Editor, Mr. Geoffrey Dawson, who is made of the right sort of editorial substance. He showed this once before when he was Editor of *The Times* under the late Lord Northcliffe. There came the moment, as it inevitably did with Northcliffe, when the Editor had to ask who was Editor, he or Northcliffe. The answer was that Mr. Dawson left the paper, but to return to it when Major Astor, M.P., took control of its destinies. There he is again, a man of character, judgment and knowledge, who has justified Lord Milner's choice of him years ago for the editorship of the *Rand Daily Mail*. I think Mr. Dawson often casts longing glances at the "nationals" and sighs at the office tradition which keeps his respectable old *Times* within its one-acre paddock. It would be fun just once to gallop the old war-horse over the sticks as they do every night in the *Mail* and *Express*. I think I detected something like that a little while ago when there was a "story" in *The Times*, quite a long one, about an old

gentleman in Germany who had called for the fire brigade to remove a swarm of bees from his beard ! I liked that.

Mr. H. A. Gwynne is Editor of the *Morning Post*. He was once a famous war correspondent for Reuter's and he had the distinction of becoming the Editor of a great newspaper, the *Standard*, without having ever set foot in such an establishment. It did not take him long to learn that an Editor, to be successful, has to be equipped with a patient spirit, a good digestion, a never-resting body and an open mind ; all of which he has maintained. He is in the happy position of being " owned " by a syndicate of Die-Hard politicians who properly trust him and know nothing about journalism. All he has to do is to keep on Dying as Hard as possible.

The Editor of the *Daily Telegraph* is Mr. Arthur F. Watson, who represents the sort of journalism dear to my heart, namely, that which comes to one by inheritance. His father was a first-rate journalist and his brother is the well-equipped Sir Alfred Watson, late Editor of the Calcutta *Statesman*, who spent a good deal of his time in India acting as unwitting

ting target for Bengalese gunmen. The *Daily Telegraph* to-day under the Watson editorship is a different affair from that which the late Lord Burnham's father conducted some fifty years ago or later when I first came into Fleet Street. To-day the *Daily Telegraph* is what I should call a "compendium of news," whereas in those other more restricted days it was a great acreage of type pretending to be quite worldly, almost skittish, but if attempted to-day, quite unreadable. I had a great hankering to join the staff of the *Daily Telegraph*. I had visions ; thought it could be turned into something very much approaching its present position ; so I wrote to Mr. Le Sage, the then Managing Editor, and outlined a detailed plan of development which, if adopted, would have left the *Daily Telegraph* with nothing to recognise it by but its title. It was a most polite though youth-inspired letter. I never got a reply ! That incident, however, the failure to receive an answer, caused me to decide never if possible to leave a letter unanswered. Anyhow, I am pleased to see that Lord Camrose and his brother and Lord Iliffe, who own the *Daily Telegraph*, have lived to see my

ideas of nearly half a century ago carried out to-day !

The Editorial Chief of the *Daily Mail* is Mr. W. L. Warden, a West-country journalist, a former *New York Herald* colleague of mine, a past Editor of the Paris *Daily Mail*, a first-rate, hard-trained, unfoolable journalist who keeps the *Daily Mail* steady on the line laid down for it by its great founder.

His opposite number on the *Daily Express*, my successor, Mr. Arthur Beverley Baxter, has a *flair* for picturesque effect. He has the human touch definitely necessary for the successful conduct of a popular newspaper. I know my *Daily Express* and its public, for I was the Editor for thirty years, and so I can truly say that I never knew any member of its staff who so quickly grasped and absorbed the individuality, the atmosphere, the spirit of the paper. Aside from which Mr. Baxter can write ; which is not always the gift of editors.

On the *News-Chronicle* used to sit Mr. Tom Clarke, one of Lord Northcliffe's young men, Manchester trained, China-cum-Australia developed, *Daily Mail* refined. He knows the

ins and outs of popular journalism better than most men.

The *Daily Herald* is ably run by Mr. W. H. Stevenson. It requires more technical knowledge to do this than it does, for instance, to conduct the *Observer* as Mr. Garvin does it; but both are successful. Mr. Garvin is generally supposed to be merely a publicist. I know better. I regard him as one of the world's leading editors, and I have never understood why he is not at the head of one of our great morning papers, unless his choice is otherwise.

So much for the Editor-in-Chief. Let us now take a look round a newspaper office, and see how the various departments of the present day are worked. The life, the mainspring part of the business is, of course, the News Department, so we will begin there. Actually the department never closes, though there is a hiatus between, say, six in the morning and ten when the actual hustle begins. The News Editor and his assistants take up the task at about ten o'clock.

To the Editor-in-Chief and his assistant, the News Editor is the most important member of the staff. Formally described, his function is

to control the detection or finding of News. In reality it is much more subtle than that. In these days, owing to the competence of news agencies and the development of communication, there is little news of a conventional nature that does not speedily become common property. The task of the News Editor is to find the News that is uncommon, that will give his own paper individuality. Since all other News Editors are engaged on a similar task, it is by no means easy to fulfil these aims. A good News Editor "feels" what is going to happen; and is therefore ready for it when it does happen. He has that gift of seeing into the future which distinguishes extraordinary from ordinary men. That in newspaper parlance is what is called "a nose for news."

With the arrival of the News Editor and his assistants the preparation of to-morrow's paper begins. Already they are well acquainted with the chief contents of rival newspapers. Shortly after awakening that morning they had scanned them that they might at once learn the best or the worst, whether their own paper had scored or been scored against, and a little later had glanced expertly at brazen placards which

screeched at them from all sides, and in the trains and omnibuses had attracted attention of neighbours by the skill and speed with which they had unfolded and folded newspapers in spaces that allowed of no elbow-room.

An important item of News has been missed. For several days the whole Press of the country has been printing one of those recitals of human drama which are vividly read by everyone. A rival journal contains news of a sensational development ; an arrest or a suicide. Which-ever it is, a hint of it has been conveyed in the thick lettering on the placards. In the newspaper itself bold headlines announce what is at one and the same time a tragedy and a triumph.

The News-men are dumbfounded. . . . How can it have happened ?

The telephone rings. The Editor is speaking. " Why didn't we . . . ? "

The News Editor rouses up the Night Editor from his slumbers by telephone : " Why didn't we . . . ? "

The Night Editor, in turn, half asleep but angry, rings up the particular reporter who was on that assignment : " Why didn't we . . . ? "

The paper has been " let down," and every

member of the staff, from the highest to the lowest, is aware of it and feels dispirited.

Perhaps it is news of a lighter order that is the cause of the "let down." A contemporary publishes exclusive information from California that after winning a great fight which lasted twenty rounds the heavy-weight champion of the world declared his intention of forsaking the ring to become a student of theology; or that, much to the consternation of his relatives, a well-known millionaire who lives in Algeria has decided to give away the greater part of his fortune during the next few years. Or the *Daily X* has stated that the Prime Minister, on holiday in Iceland, intends to take a peerage. In these instances it is possible to take action which may more than compensate for the reverse sustained. Distance is no obstacle to personal contact.

"I love fighting, but it has taught me one thing—that there is a soul as well as a body."

These words, which have a peculiar magic because they are spoken in California and heard in London, appear in the account of the interview which is printed next morning.

"I am giving my money away because it

pleases me to do so and because it has become a burden to me," says the millionaire from Algeria.

The Prime Minister is telephoned to at Reikjavik. His answer is the usual "Yes. No."

The atmosphere of the newspaper office is cheerful. The Editor remarks: "That story of the eccentric millionaire is a good one," or "That interview with the pugilist-theologian is first-class." In other newspaper offices editors ask: "Why didn't we . . .?"

It is this acute rivalry which gives to newspaper life that continuous tension which is the secret of its attraction as well as of its repulsion. Journalists hate their work as much as they love it.

If no News of outstanding importance has been missed the News Editor and his assistants follow their usual routine. Laid out on a table before them are copies of London newspapers having that look of freshness which a newspaper wears but once. Their first task is to make a careful comparison between their own and other newspapers and to draw up a complete list of items which they have published and others have missed and of those which they have

missed and others have published. This list is an instrument of precision for testing efficiency and progress.

A newspaper lives for a day and is reborn on the morrow. From the moment of its issue, its triumphs and its failings are exposed to the full view of its rivals, for they, like any other possessor of a penny, can purchase a copy of it. At the instant of its issue, too, the triumphs and failings of those who work upon it are made manifest. Journalism is therefore unique among callings. Each day is for it the Day of Judgment.

Preparation of the list of gains and losses does not occupy much time. From the circumstances in which information reaches them, newspapers usually have a good idea as to whether or not it is likely to be exclusive. If their opinion of it is favourable, then they display it boldly, for no better advertisement of their alertness is possible than the prominence in their columns of News that is to be found in no other journal. Not many of such items are procurable, but their number and quality have a decisive influence upon the newspaper's fortunes. A reader is married to his newspaper and he quickly divorces it if it is not ahead of others. Readers

of the *Daily Y* do not care to hear from readers of the *Daily X* News which has appeared in the *Daily X* but not in the *Daily Y*. The certified net sales reveal who is winning, who is losing.

The <i>Daily X</i>	.	.	.	5,000,000
The <i>Daily Y</i>	.	.	.	4,500,000

Six months before the position was reversed. The *Daily Y* was then in front. As the net sales move up and down, so advertising revenues are supposed to rise and fall, though this does not necessarily follow. Net sales are the blood circulation of a newspaper, advertising revenue the air which fills its lungs. The state of both is accounted for by the list of losses compiled each morning. This list, as has been said, is the instrument of precision which tests the efficiency of progress and of the whole business.

The News Editor next proceeds to find or evolve ideas for News for to-morrow's morning paper. It is an undertaking that calls for an enormous amount of detailed work. Notes left over by the night staff suggesting that various items promise development and should be "followed up" are attended to. Then all the metropolitan and the chief provincial news-

papers are carefully scrutinised. In a sense the Press is an organic whole. Newspapers are by nature anthropophagous; they live upon one another. Each day they offer themselves up to their contemporaries to be devoured. Remarkable scares have originated from a few lines hidden away in a rival journal.

Examination of the newspapers occupies only a short time. A glance at a paragraph tells the trained news-seeker its essence and possibilities. A momentary carelessness or an error of judgment may lead to the missing of important news. On the other hand, a spark of intuition may reveal in a whole page of print the starting-point of a story which will set everyone talking.

Meanwhile various other tasks are proceeding in the News Department. A list of the day's events which are likely to yield News is being drawn up in schedule form for the information and guidance of the various heads of departments. The name of the reporter or reporters on the job precedes each item :

JOHNSON. 2 p.m. Caxton Hall. Lady A. will lecture on "The Manners of the Epoch." This is News. Lady A. is 72 years of age.

SMITH. 4 p.m. Friends Meeting House. Mr. T. will speak upon Statistical Aspects of the Polish Lithuanian Question. Good scenes here.

WILSON. 11 a.m. Crystal Palace; opening of the International Bee Exhibition. Estimated that hundreds of billions of bees representative of all nations will be there.

MISS JONES. Princess Irrogoto the Philippine beauty will talk on Beauty Culture. Good story.

Another early morning task of the News Department is to look at letters from readers which contain News or hints of News. By every post scores of letters reach a newspaper; all kinds of composition are represented: opinionative and informative, critical and complimentary, scurrilous and slanderous.

“Your paper is . . . rotten.”

“I have read your paper for thirty years and found daily inspiration from it. It has been the guiding star of my life. Yesterday I was shocked to read in it a paragraph which referred in a slighting manner to orphans. As I am an orphan myself and none the worse for it, I take strong objection to this.”

"Can you tell me where I can find my husband?"

"I think you would do well to observe the antics of Lord X, the . . . Minister who is preparing to dish his party."

"Why don't you send a reporter to No. 10 . . . Road? There are fine goings on there."

"Why are you so bitter about the Catholics?"

"You are always showing your Roman bias."

"I object to your anti-Semitism."

"You are too anti-Hitler."

"I have invented a perpetual motion engine. Please send an expert to see it. It is a world startler."

"A pigeon flew in at my window last evening and sat on a picture all night. Please send me a guinea for this news."

"Near us there lives an old couple who can't read or write, who have never been in an omnibus, a tram or a train, and who have never been outside this town."

Of these letters the last alone has promise of a News story that is "fit to print." It is now nearly eleven o'clock. By this time the News

Editor has all the material at hand necessary for the preparation of a preliminary schedule of to-morrow's News, and has a rough conception of what to-morrow's paper will look like.

At twelve o'clock there is a conference in the Editor's room. Here are assembled the heads, the News, Foreign, Literary, Picture, Gossip and Feature Editors. This conference usually resolves itself into an inquest on the previous day's paper.

By this time the reporters who are on what is called "the day turn" have arrived, and are assembled in the News Room, where each of them has his or her desk and typewriter. Among them young men predominate. Reporting is frequently an adventure which calls for mental juvenility as well as physical hardihood. Frequently, also, it is an occupation that requires mature judgment. No one is so valuable to a paper as a solid reliable reporter who has reported pretty well everything that can happen in life and who is not yet stale. The best type of reporter is one who has gone through the mill on a provincial newspaper where he has had to run the gamut of all departments—

weddings, funerals, council meetings, political gatherings, book reviews and market reports.

Distribution of the morning's work begins. The News Editor assigns to each reporter the day's task or tasks, giving instructions as to the approximate number of words desired and, whenever necessary, as to "the line" which must be taken.

One by one the reporters disperse to collect the facts for their stories. The word "story" is legitimately used. Journalism of the twentieth century differs fundamentally from that of the nineteenth century in that it recognises that all the episodes of life worthy of being reported in print are stories about human beings, dramas or comedies, the pathos or humour of which is intensified by the fact of their being true.

While the News Editor is allotting work to the reporters, his assistants are communicating by telephone and telegraph with local correspondents, instructing them to send reports of various matters suggested by the morning's newspapers. Each national daily newspaper has a local correspondent in every region in Great

Britain, and in every important centre abroad. A provincial newspaper contains a hint of an impending police-court case which promises revelations. The local correspondent in the area concerned is "rung up" and is given precise directions as to the number of words required and the aspect which is most likely to interest readers. Or perhaps there has been an extraordinary event abroad which may have interesting consequences; the suicide of a prima donna, the elopement of a princess, or a secret meeting of statesmen on an island in the Mediterranean Sea. At once the News Editor gets into touch with the Foreign Editor and draws his attention to the item concerned; but in all probability he has already noted it and has telegraphed or telephoned instructions to the appropriate correspondent.

Let us now take a look at the heads of the other departments. First, the Literary Editor. It is his task to select for publication articles, serial stories and readers' letters, and to choose for review books which having News value must be noticed immediately. Every day he and his assistants read through hundreds of manuscripts. In a year the authors of such articles

represent almost every occupation mentioned in the Post Office Directory.

News-picture (or Art) Editor. This Editor is responsible for the page of illustrations and for the illustrations scattered about in the newspapers. He has a staff of photographers at his disposal, and each day representatives of agencies call upon him with numerous photographs from which he may make a selection. A good News-picture Editor is continually on the look-out for something novel—something which his readers have not seen before.

The Gossip Editor. No post on a newspaper has antecedents so ancient as those of the Gossip Editor ; nor is any so close to human nature as it is. Gossip is the currency of speech ; without it life would be dull and inexpressive. The function of the Gossip Editor is to collect and present in brightly written paragraphs information about the characters and doings of persons who have achieved prominence. It is a pity, but it is a fact that ordinary people are more interested in the lives of exceptional people than exceptional people are in the lives of ordinary people. This is the secret of the success of newspaper gossip.

Editor of the Woman's Page. This is a most responsible post. The twentieth century is a woman's century. Women number at least half if not more of the readers of a national daily newspaper. What is more, they are the chief purchasers of the community ; commerce is largely built upon their requirements. Hence it is mainly for them that advertisers advertise. Modern women have a multitude of interests : dress, beauty-culture, physical exercise, diet, cooking, house decoration, careers, sex and other problems. The Editress with her assistants provides pages filled with articles and articlettes which deal with various aspects of these subjects, and faithfully reflect the changeable moods of unchangeable femininity.

The Sporting Editor. People do in their leisure read what pleases them most. Judged by this axiom sport is the chief recreative interest of the British people. The Sporting Editor is therefore a key editor of a newspaper. If he has the gift of prophecy (vulgarly called " tipping ") he adds thousands to the circulation of his newspaper and puts untold wealth into the pockets of the people who have faith in him. But horse-racing is only one of his many pre-

occupations. He must have a general knowledge of most games, and be capable of superintending a staff of experts on football, cricket, boxing, golf, tennis, billiards, etc., etc.

The Sporting Editor can at times be too successful in tipping. If he has, the circulation booms inordinately, but, strange to say, that has a curious effect on advertising. I recall that some ten or a dozen years ago one of our most expert racing writers was astonishingly successful in tipping winners. He tipped two and three a day with the obvious result of bounding popularity. In steps the advertiser and says: "That's all right. Very good from a sporting point of view, but sporting news is no use to advertisers. We do not care to advertise in sporting newspapers. So out comes my advertisement." Therefore what we won on the swings we lost on the merry-go-rounds.

The City or Financial Editor who has an office in the City also attends at the chief office after 'change. He or his assistant supervises the pages that deal with the Stock and Share, the money and the commodity markets. He writes comments on the records and prospects of companies and upon the economic outlook

generally. It is his duty to make clear to the average man the complexities of the financial system. In these days when so many holders of small savings are investors in companies he should be their counsellor and protector, fulfilling the rôle of unofficial public trustee.

In addition to this constellation of Editors, a newspaper employs numerous experts : dramatic, film, book-reviewing, wireless and motor. All these experts are responsible for either occasional or regular contributions. National newspapers also have cartoonists and humorous writers on the staffs. These various specialists attend at the office in the morning or are communicated with by telephone. The cartoon is usually a matter of careful conference.

As the day wears on the office becomes a great news-receiving station. News comes by various means : it comes on the tirelessly ticking tape-machine ; it comes by telegraph, by telephone, by wireless and by messenger. Thousands of people of all nationalities are engaged throughout the world collecting and distributing it. In this stream of intelligence is reflected the whole character of our civilisation, the whole life of our times.

An aeroplane has been sighted off Newfoundland flying high ; weather windy. . . . The wedding of the Duchess of . . . and Lord . . . took place at Westminster Abbey to-day. The crowd was enormous. . . . At the West London Police Court two women were charged with shoplifting. . . . Trotsky has shaved off his moustache. . . . A man aged 110 who lived on milk and black bread has died at a village near Sofia to-day. . . . A couple were found shot dead in a Hampstead flat. . . . Rebel troops were menacing at Peking. . . . The dollar slumped. . . . A brilliant crowd gathered at the races. . . . Foreign steamer sank off the Bay this afternoon ; feared many drowned. . . .

The last intimation causes a stir even among newspaper-men who are accustomed to the unusual and the calamitous. Prompt action is called for. Only one reporter happens to be at the office ; a young man perhaps who fancies himself at descriptive writing. He has just returned from a conference, say, of ice-cream experts.

"Is no one else here?" asks the News Editor, rushing into the News-room.

In a few moments the young man, together with photographers, is speeding in a car to an aerodrome; here in response to telephonic instructions an aeroplane awaits the party. Half an hour later they are over the Channel.

As five o'clock draws near the night staff begins to assemble. The sub-editor on early turn, the leader-writers and perhaps the Night Editor arrive. In some offices there is a Managing Editor and in some a Night Editor and in others there are no such functionaries. The Managing Editor who does not manage the paper—his title is therefore a misnomer—is usually in charge at night. He is the supervising Editor who is continually on duty at night. The Editor-in-Chief is on duty day and night; whether he is in or out of the office, most of his waking hours are taken up with his paper's interests.

Towards evening another conference of the leading members of the staff is held at which the Editor presides. The aim of this gathering is twofold: stimulation and co-ordination. Each item on the News Schedule is discussed and its News value in relation to others appraised. Ideas and gossip are interchanged and, generally

speaking, the nerve and intellect of the editorial organism are tuned up.

The inflow of News never ceases, and as the day proceeds becomes larger and larger. Its ultimate destination is the sub-editor's room. By six o'clock all the sub-editors are in their places. At one end of the room is seated the Chief sub-editor. At another desk near him is the "copy-taster." Each has a spike in front of him and a waste-paper basket by his side. All round the round table are the sub-editors, from twelve to twenty in number, each with a spike in front of him.

The "copy-taster" is a man with an experienced and sensitive news-palate. The mass of copy which reaches the sub-editor's room is first submitted to his judgment. It is he who determines its value and selects the sub-editor whom he considers best fitted to deal with it. Upon the corner of every manuscript he inscribes the number of words which shall be printed and the kind of type which shall be used for headlines. He then places it on one of the trays or "sections" before him, and a boy collects and delivers it. Copy which is plainly worthless is thrown into the waste-paper basket, and that

which in case of insufficiency may be useful is “spiked.”

The sub-editor is the “unknown soldier” of journalism. He works during hours when the majority of men are either taking their pleasures or are asleep; and the public has heard little about him. But he is the real craftsman of his profession, the maker of the newspaper in the real sense of the term—in the final form in which it reaches the reader. Other branches merely provide him with raw material or at best with partly manufactured goods. His task is to fashion the finished product. It is one that requires all manner of deft and high-speed operations: the cutting down and sometimes the rewriting of manuscript, the insertion of punctuation, the detection and correction of all kinds of errors and imperfections, and the composition of suitable headlines. A bad sub-editor spoils material. A good sub-editor is a creative artist.

The Chief sub-editor is in close consultation with the copy-taster or news-valuer at his side, and occasionally revises his decisions. After it leaves the hands of the sub-editor all the more important copy is brought to him, and if he

thinks necessary he directs that amendments or improvements shall be made. Before him are skeleton make-ups of various pages showing the positions of advertisements and feature articles. He is then able contingently to "place" the chief items of News and roughly to plan to-morrow's newspaper.

From the sub-editor's room the copy is conveyed to the Composing-room. Here it is cut up and divided into "takes," that is, into batches of conveniently moderate size for distribution among the Linotype operators. Not the least remarkable characteristic of newspaper production is the carefulness with which account is kept of materials dealing with hundreds of subjects, that constantly assume new forms, and that are perpetually in rapid motion.

In the Composing-room the columns that have been set up by machinery, even to the black head-lines, are quickly laid into page forms. Thence they go down to the stereotyping department to be cast into semi-cylinders. These cylinders are placed on the saddles of the great Goss, Hoe, Foster, Victory or Crabtree presses, capable of turning out from 20,000 to

35,000 copies per hour. By midnight the first editions are well away. Changes are made hour by hour until four in the morning.

It is not to be supposed that it is only the Editorial Department and its companion departments of the Composing and Press rooms that make a newspaper. Delivery departments are vital. Circulation involves incessant vigilance and endless expenditure. The delivery of newspapers is itself one of the mysteries and romances of the age. In France, in Germany, on the Continent, and even in provincial American towns they have systems of direct delivery from the newspaper office to the subscriber's house. This system does not prevail in England. There is no such thing as a private delivery subscriber to, say, the *Daily Mail*. Indeed with its millions of readers it has them only on its books as registered readers, but the delivery is done through newsagents, and these in turn have no direct contact with the newspaper. The agents secure their supplies from the great wholesale houses like Smith, Marshall, Toler, etc.; so that actually the books of the newspaper contain very few names of customers. It is not considered unusual, for instance, for one firm of

wholesale agents to draw its morning supply of 100,000 copies of a single paper.

Then there is the Business Department of a newspaper which has a definite and most important rôle to play. In its control are the various mechanical and advertising departments ; the purchasing of supplies, the control of finance ; the thousand and one things that come under the head of management. Take paper alone. The *Daily Express*, for instance, assuming a 20-page paper, with an approximate daily output of 2,000,000 copies, devours 1,741 tons of paper every week. The price of newsprint in London at the present time (autumn 1933) is £10 10s. a ton, which runs up the weekly newsprint bill of that paper to no less than £18,280. There is a special department under the vice-chairman to keep close watch on the world's paper supplies and its markets ; for it must be remembered that the mere fluctuation of a penny in the pound of paper makes an enormous difference.

I remember those staggering war days when, owing to the paper shortage, we were forced to reduce our nationals to four pages a day, and even then we found the cost almost prohibi-

tive, for paper was as high as £90 per ton, and we were glad indeed to have it at that price.

It is not my purpose here to go into the technicalities of newspaper-making. It is enough to say that hardly a week passes without its new gadget, mechanical, scientific and what-not for speeding up. I go up into the Composing-room now and rub my eyes. Everything is done by machinery. Type makes itself and distributes itself. Photographs of people a thousand miles away come flashing into the wire room to be turned into zinc plates before you can say Jack Robinson ; reporters who used to be admonished against interviewing people on the telephone because of possible inaccuracies of transmission sit calmly in little booths interviewing over long-distance cables or radio telephones, notabilities in Manila, in Buenos Ayres, in Hollywood. Expense ? Hang it.

Anyhow, why bother about the comparatively insignificant expenses of the editorial department in these hectic days of the circulation fight ? Never in the history of journalism or, indeed, I feel certain in British or any other business affairs, has there been such a condition

as that which has obtained in Fleet Street in the past year of 1933. Never has there been such competition, such rivalry, such fierceness, so utterly reckless an expenditure of money. The circulation war which has now been raging so long and so intensely has cost the newspapers hundreds upon hundreds of thousands of pounds. The sums literally thrown away week by week can never be recovered. A steady loss of £15,000 a week for any single newspaper engaged in these spectacular and futile hostilities does not appear to bring the day of settlement nearer. It has resolved itself into a mere punitive war in which the richer papers seek to cause the original aggressor so much financial damage that he will be forced to cry for mercy. Up to the time of writing there appears to be no break in the clouds.

The circulation fight dates back a long time. Its originator was, of course, Lord Northcliffe, the inevitable originator of all things in modern journalism. He began the fight with readers' insurance. It was not a new thing in journalism, for it had been worked more or less successfully by George Newnes in *Tit-Bits* as long ago as 1887. But Lord Northcliffe adapted it for

daily newspaper purposes and naturally the others were obliged to follow his lead. Higher and higher went the prizes and higher and higher went the circulations, but the *Daily Mail*, whether by dint of more expert leadership or tradition, was always in the lead. There was a real sensation when Northcliffe announced the crossing of the million sale mark. True, the paper had that sale during the Boer War, but it fell back in normal times. The others were far behind, the *Chronicle*, *Daily Express* and *Daily News* round the 400,000 figure. But with the intensification of the circulation fight they, too, began to move upward. The war pushed up circulations, too. Presently the position altered. The *Daily Express*, acting under the strong impetus of Lord Beaverbrook's business leadership, crept up to second place, far past the million, closer and closer to its old rival. Then in stepped a new claimant, the *Daily Herald*, and now the fur began to fly. In the *Daily Herald's* conning-tower sits a little man named Elias as Managing Director, who has had vast experience as a gift Editor in raising the bulk sale of such papers as *John Bull* and the *People*. He began to apply these methods to

the *Daily Herald*. The others could not let him walk away with the prizes, so they, too, took a hand, and presently the London popular Press and some of its provincial brethren were engaged in giving away with open hands goods and prize-money to the extent of millions.

Lord Rothermere flung in his bags of gold in an attempt to stem the tide. Lord Beaverbrook flung in more and more in the firm belief that the only way to stop the objectionable and suicidal practice was to make it too expensive for anyone to carry it on; the *News-Chronicle* chipped in because it had to and the *Daily Herald*, nothing daunted, met all its challengers. Meanwhile the *Daily Express* suddenly and unexpectedly produced a detailed net sale of over 2,000,000 a day, the *Daily Herald* certified 2,000,000 at least, and the *Daily Mail* for the first time in history was obliged to admit third place; while the *News-Chronicle* came loping along with a gigantic figure of some hundreds of thousands below the others, but still gigantic. All for what? Certainly not in the interests of the newspapers themselves and their shareholders. The fact is that the combatants have

been caught in a trap from which there can be no escape until (1) either they come to some agreement in which all is trust and confidence, or (2) all their money is gone and the official receiver takes charge.

CHAPTER IV

PARLIAMENT AND WAR

JOURNALISM was dominated by politics during the nineteenth century. Newspapers were all avowedly political organs, and they appealed primarily to the business and professional classes whose private interests were always directly affected by the issues of party politics. The debates in the House of Commons were, therefore, reported at great length in all the principal newspapers. No self-respecting London or provincial newspaper gave less than a full page and generally more to its reports of Parliamentary speeches, and every speech of national importance was invariably reported verbatim in every important newspaper in the country. Even the small provincial newspapers always made a point of fully reporting the speeches of their local members. When at the tail-end of a debate Mr. Buncombe of Little Puddlington at last managed to catch the Speaker's eye, and rose to address a weary and listless House in an oration whose importance was in inverse proportion to its length, he knew that at any rate someone in the Reporters' Gallery was

eagerly taking down every word of his unappreciated eloquence. His speech might empty the House, but it would be certain to fill the columns of his local journal.

Now, this practice of printing extensive reports of the speeches in Parliament was a severe tax both on newspaper staffs and on the limited space of the House of Commons. It meant that every important newspaper had to have from six to twelve reporters always on duty in the House, and there was great difficulty in accommodating them all. There was an arrangement whereby the Speaker, through the Serjeant-at-Arms, allotted a box, if possible, to each newspaper, and once a newspaper had secured the privilege of a box, its claim to that box became, by a sort of freehold, its own indefeasible right, apparently for all time. It became almost impossible to shift a paper from its freehold box. Thus, when Alfred Harmsworth started the *Daily Mail*, he found there was no box available. The Speaker shrugged his shoulders and said, "Sorry, no room." So, in order to obtain a place in the Reporters' Gallery, Harmsworth had to buy up a provincial newspaper which "owned"

a box. Similarly, when the *Daily Express* started, the only way in which we could secure a place in the Press Gallery was to hire a box belonging to a moribund Irish newspaper, and we paid "through the nose" for the privilege!

The House of Commons is the most conservative institution in the world. It was only after a long struggle which lasted through the greater part of the eighteenth century, that Press representatives were granted admission to the precincts of the House at all; but once this privilege was granted, a traditional procedure grew up in regard to it which soon became sacrosanct; and to suggest a modification of the established usage seemed almost like tampering with the British Constitution itself. I remember what difficulty I had in securing an extra ticket for the Lobby of the House of Commons. The Lobby is a great fountain of information. Special admission tickets are necessary for people who are not M.P.'s or former M.P.'s. I wanted an extra Lobby ticket for members of the Staff of the *Daily Express*; and when at last after pulling all sorts of strings, even to the extent of bulldozing a Cabinet friend, I managed to secure

one, I found that it was made out in my name and was not transferable ! I did not want to visit the Lobby. I wanted it for a correspondent, but it was a long time before I was allowed to have my name removed and we could use the ticket for the purpose for which it was intended. To-day, of course, things both in Gallery and Lobby are much easier. Now that Parliamentary reports only occupy a modest space in the average newspaper, the Press Gallery is no longer crowded with relays of reporters taking down at top speed every word that falls from the lips of our legislators, and the need for so many distinctive " boxes " has disappeared.

The cutting down of newspaper reports of Parliamentary debates and political speeches generally is one of the most significant changes that have taken place in British journalism during my time. Like so many other innovations it was due mainly to the initiative of Lord Northcliffe. He realised that politics plays a far smaller part in the life of the nation than most of our political pundits imagine. He realised, too, that if the newspaper was to reach the vast new public of semi-educated readers

that had grown up since the Education Act of 1870, it must function on a broader basis than any of the existing journals, that it must break loose from its thralldom to party politics, and base its appeal on human interest and not on political propaganda. He knew that what this new public wanted was not political speeches, but news and incident and the varied drama of human life.

Accordingly, in the new popular journalism which he inaugurated with the publication of the *Daily Mail* in 1896, politics received scant attention. Happenings at Westminster were treated solely from the standpoint of their *news value*, and political speeches were left unreported save for a brief descriptive summary provided by the Parliamentary "sketch" writer.

Other newspapers which aimed at large circulations were quick to follow the new lead, though naturally the older journals who had to maintain their political traditions continued to give more space to Parliamentary reports than the new national newspapers like the *Daily Mail* and *Daily Express*. Generally speaking, however, long reports of speeches gave place to brief digests from one to three columns in

length according to the importance of the debate. These were supplemented by the descriptive article of the Parliamentary "sketch" writer, who henceforward acquired additional importance on the staff of the newspaper. Northcliffe did not invent the Parliamentary "sketch." It was a feature of many newspapers long before his time. One of the most brilliant writers in this department of journalism was Sir Henry Lucy ("Toby, M.P." of *Punch*), whose daily "Letters" from Parliament delighted readers of the *Daily News* in the late 'eighties and the 'nineties. Another distinguished "sketch" writer was T. P. O'Connor. "T. P." was one of the first journalists to use a typewriter in the Press Room of the House of Commons. He invented a sort of shorthand typescript, using a typewriter in which many of the keys did not work. His "copy" was a sight; more like a Chinese laundry ticket than a newspaper manuscript. I always felt sorry for the poor devils who had to transcribe his notes, though "T. P." never tired of assuring me that it was quite a simple matter for anyone with average intelligence. Here is an idea of what

the sub-editors had to contend with when they dealt with his "copy."

Spkr lookd surpris'd at hon mbrs ^{W.} ~~interptn~~

& gd natrdly remarkd tt twas impossibl make hdway if hn
mbrs wr. allud to intvane on sch slight notice, which
evokd ld chesng.

A specimen of the late T. P. O'Connor's typewritten MS.
as it came from the House of Commons.

"Tay Pay's" typewritten hieroglyphics always reminded me of the "copy" produced by the great Horace Greeley, the editor of the New York *Tribune*, who divided with Delane of the London *Times* the reputation of being the world's greatest journalist. Greeley's calligraphy was in inverse ratio to his eminence as a journalist. There have been many atrocious handwritings in the past and their terror to compositors and proof-readers has been lessened by the introduction of typed copy. Indeed most modern newspaper editors—except in many tradition-ruled establishments—insist on all manuscript being typed. This effects an enormous saving in time and labour; something like 25 per cent. Sub-editors get through typescript faster and with greater concentration, compositors gallop through it and proof-

readers bless it. But in the old days of Horace Greeley, Mr. Cassius Scholes was only experimenting with his typewriting machine out in the wilds of Wisconsin, and newspaper mechanics were perforce subjected to the additional tortures inflicted on them by such penmanship as Horace Greeley's. It was so bad that scarcely anyone could read it. The Composing-room of the *Tribune* was particularly in dread of it and the compositor who "drew" Mr. Greeley's daily Editorial contribution considered himself to be a victim of unkind fate. There was one man, a compositor named Palmer, who found it less irksome to read than the others, and finally Mr. Greeley, who had grown irritated at the constant appeals from his victims for explanation or identification of certain illegible words, insisted that Palmer should be put permanently on the job of setting up the Editor's leader every evening. After a while Palmer became letter perfect. He was the most indispensable man in the establishment. He seldom referred to the Chief; always managed to unravel the knot. With perfection on the part of Mr. Palmer came a sense of power. He began to "put it across"

the Composing-room; took little liberties; "cheeked" the foreman; came in a little late and went home a little earlier, and in fact did all those things which are natural in Court favourites and spoiled children.

The years rolled on and Palmer had finally consolidated his position to the extent of setting up only the great man's nightly column and a half and steadfastly declining to do anything else. He was, as I said, indispensable, and Mr. Greeley aided and abetted his eccentricities in the Composing-room.

One day one of the compositors had a stroke of genius. Palmer was insufferable. He had to be taken down a few pegs. So the whole room, some sixty or seventy men, entered into a conspiracy. They took half a dozen broad white newspaper sheets and spread them on the floor like a great carpet. Then they took two little bantam cocks, set them to dance on the printing ink plates and let them loose on the white sheets until these sheets were crossed and criss-crossed with the black claw-marks of the little birds. The sheets soon looked as if they had been covered with weird hieroglyphics. Then the conspirators took up the

sheets, cut them into regular "copy" size, numbered them and placed them on Palmer's copy-hook where he always found his leader when he came in at six o'clock.

Then they all went to their places and waited for Mr. Palmer. He came in, late as usual; took off his coat leisurely; hung up his hat; donned his apron; put on his spectacles; filled his corn-cob pipe; lighted it at the gas-jet above his "case"; took up his composing-stick and lifted the "copy" from the hook. All eyes strained on Palmer. Their eyes popped out, for—*he began to set it!* On he went, line after line, never deviating, sheet after sheet, stick after stick. Once or twice he rubbed his glasses, but on he went. The conspirators hardly breathed. It was an amazing sight. Suddenly Palmer stopped. He looked hard at the "copy." Then he walked away from his case, turned round and looked again. He lifted his hand to set a letter and hesitated. Next he scratched his head and a puzzled look came into his wrinkled old face. He tried and tried and still he could not go on. Stuck, for the first time in years! He was too proud to appeal to his neighbour. He would die first; yet he knew

that he must finish the task. Finally, the old man took his pride in his hands, walked straight out of the Composing-room, everybody looking at him, and went down to the Editor's sanctum.

"Hello, Palmer!" said the great man. "I haven't seen you here for years. Anything wrong?" as he saw the old warrior's pained expression.

"Yes, Mr. Greeley," said Palmer. "I am terribly sorry. I'm stuck. I can't make out this word."

He held out the offending sheet. Mr. Greeley took it, put on his spectacles and said:

"Which? This one?"

"Yes, sir."

"Why, what's wrong, you damfool! That word is 'unconstitutional.' Any ass could see that!"

So poor old Palmer went back and set it; and they said afterwards that it was the best leading article that Horace Greeley had ever written.

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I must apologise for this digression, but this story fits so well with "Tay Pay's" type-written hieroglyphics that I could not resist interpolating it here.

Regrets are sometimes expressed that the old practice of reporting political speeches at length has been abandoned by the modern newspaper. The question is, how many people bothered to read these reports? How many people sit through what is left of them in *The Times* to-day? The few who do so rarely have time to read them in the morning; they reserve them for their evening leisure. That of itself shows that their news-value is of no great importance; and it must always be remembered that News has become the first consideration of the modern newspaper. In a speech he delivered before the Press Club in 1913, the late Lord Rosebery, who was perhaps the greatest political orator of his generation, frankly stated that except among those whose "painful duty" it was to read speeches for professional reasons, he could never find anybody who read any speeches.

That this should be so reflects no discredit on the public intelligence. It may be said without any disrespect to our legislators, that few of their speeches are worth reporting *in extenso*. In the endless battle of words that make up the warfare of party politics, there is

a constant repetition of theme and argument which the exigencies of debate doubtless demand, but which can hardly be said to provide profitable reading for anyone not concerned in the fortunes of the debate. It is not often that vital new arguments are brought forward, or that the old ones are put with such force and originality as to merit public attention. In the ordinary way, therefore, a brief summary of the day's doings in Parliament is all that the public requires, and it is for the Parliamentary "sketch" writer to see that the salient points of the debate are duly recorded.

But the duties of the "sketch" writer do not end here. Behind the word-play that goes on in the House of Commons, a great human drama is being enacted as well, consisting of the clash of personalities, of the interplay of conflicting temperaments and psychological forces ; and it is this human side of the political drama, rather than the substance of the speeches, which interests the general public, and provides scope for the graphic pen of the journalist. What was the temper of the House during the Prime Minister's eagerly awaited speech ? What impression did he create while he was speak-

ing? Did he inspire confidence, or did he fidget about with his notes, and betray the usual mannerisms which mark his oratory when he is ill at ease? What was his facial expression like when irrepressible Mr. Blank from below the gangway stultified his peroration with a deadly interruption? It is the dramatic asides, the lively incidents, the witty back-chat, the idiosyncrasies of speakers, the tense moments of conflict between two dominant personalities, the whole human setting of the Parliamentary scene, that the public likes to read about, and it is this that the popular newspaper sets out to give it.

Naturally a far greater responsibility rests with the Parliamentary " sketch " writer to-day than formerly when speeches were reported in full. He must make a far greater effort to be impartial. His accounts must not only be lively and picturesque, but they must be comprehensive and fair-minded and give a truthful impression of the day's doings in the House. In the old days he could be as biased as he liked and throw all the limelight on the speakers of the political party his newspaper supported; the reader could always correct the bias by

referring to the text of the speeches in another part of the paper. To-day the reader cannot. He has to rely entirely on the descriptive sketch. If this is so biased as to be misleading, he gets a wrong idea of the Parliamentary situation, the summaries of the speeches themselves being far too brief to provide an adequate corrective.

It has to be admitted, I think, that the new method of Parliamentary reporting as practised by most newspapers is open to serious criticism. It is not the method itself which is at fault, but the irresponsible way in which it is so frequently used. The descriptive sketch is scrappier than of old and is more flagrantly partisan. It is unfortunately too often the case that no attempt is made to provide the reader with a fair summary of the day's debate, or to distribute the limelight equally. Just those points are singled out from the speeches which accord or discord with the policy of the paper, and emphasis is laid on these to the exclusion of everything else. Often the emphasis is entirely unwarranted, with the result that the reader gets a false impression of the significance of the debate and of the relative importance of the various speeches delivered. As I have

said, this partisanship did not matter in the old days when the " sketch " was supplementary to the reports of speeches, but now that it has become a substitute for these reports, a greater degree of responsibility attaches to it, and readers have a right to demand more comprehensive and impartial surveys from the " sketch " writer than they usually get.

The truth of the matter is that from devoting too much attention to the sayings and doings of our legislators, the Press has now gone to the other extreme, and devotes too little. For this, Parliament has itself to blame. Since the War it has degenerated into an assembly of talkers and do-nothings. All reality has departed from party politics, and the shadow-fights at Westminster have ceased to interest anybody. Never in my long experience as a journalist has Parliament been so lacking in forcible and picturesque personalities, or so out of touch with the feeling of the nation, as at the present time. It is not surprising, therefore, that the national newspapers have ceased to treat its manœuvres seriously, and prefer to concentrate on the few political issues which seem to them to touch the realities of the moment.

There is another point to be observed in discussing the political side of the modern newspaper. At the best of times the issues of party politics cover only a small portion of the public issues affecting the great mass of people in their daily lives. There are a multitude of minor problems in the complex life of the nation, many of which touch individual sections of the community far more closely than the big party questions of the day. These need to be ventilated and brought to the notice of Parliament. In this field the popular Press has always been exceedingly active. It has made it its business to air popular grievances however small they may appear to be to the national legislators. It has entered, so to speak, into the by-ways of public life, where most people really live, and it has insisted that these are just as worthy of the attention of Parliament as the main thoroughfares. This important result of the movement of modern journalism away from party politics must not be overlooked. In broadening the basis of journalism the modern newspaper has also broadened the basis of politics. And this I hold to be all to the good.

The new method of handling Parliamentary news which Northcliffe inaugurated in the *Daily Mail* was in keeping with his general plan to give the popular newspaper a "magazine" character. A movement in this direction had already been started by the *Daily Telegraph*, which was the first newspaper to realise that the general public are interested in a multitude of other things besides politics. Writing in 1890, George Augustus Sala remarked that of the eight or nine thousand leading articles he wrote for the *Daily Telegraph* during his thirty-three years' association with that paper, hardly any of them had the slightest political colour. He wrote about "dogs and cats, new books, old china, pictures, plain needlework, cookery, the fashions, paper collars, pantomimes, governesses, maid-servants, the licensing of music-halls, Italian organ-grinders, the adulteration of food, imprisonment for debt, sewing-machines, and the confidence trick"—about anything and everything, in fact, except politics. The *Daily Telegraph* was also the first newspaper to start the fashion of running "Holiday problems." One year it posed the question "Is Marriage a Failure?"

and ran it for a whole summer season. The *Daily Telegraph* at that time was considered to be most unusually pert and forward.

Northcliffe carried the "magazine" appeal of the newspaper a stage further. He deliberately converted the newspaper into a daily topical magazine. He got his idea from the French press, from Emile Zola and Henri Rochefort of *L'Intransigeant*. The *feuilleton* and the topical article became as much a part of his paper as the News itself. And wherever possible the News too was written up as a "story," in order to attract the public by its human appeal. He introduced the descriptive "sketch" writer everywhere. For example, Kitchener went to Khartoum. With him went young G. W. Steevens, and a couple of years later, when the South African War broke out, Northcliffe sent Steevens to the scene of operations to write impressionist sketches of life and conditions at the front as he had from the Soudan. In so doing he gave a new direction to the activities of the War Correspondent. Hitherto the War Correspondent had confined himself more or less to military operations. Steevens, who was not a professional journalist

at all, but an impressionist writer, had instructions to "write up" the scene on its human side, not just to concentrate on battles and sieges and military tactics. He was to describe the drama of war as it was lived by the troops taking part, to give sketches of their lives in the field and in their billets, to depict their reactions to the country and the people and the strangeness of the local scene, to bring into the foreground all those incidental personal happenings of war—tragic, humorous, pathetic—which find no place in the despatches of generals and military histories, but which are vital realities to the men who do the fighting. He was to give, in a word, an intimate and human picture of the African scene so that those at home could clearly picture to themselves how things were going with their friends and relatives who were fighting in the far-off Veldt. This was a new departure in the journalism of war, and we all know how effectively it was developed later during the Great War.

I think the foundation of modern war correspondence was laid, not in this South African experimentation by George Steevens, Julian

Ralph, Bennet Burleigh, Charles Hands and H. A. Gwynne and others, but before them in the Soudan where Steevens, Gwynne, Burleigh and others had previous experience under Kitchener, and by dint of patient hammering away at their trade, finally convinced the great War Lord that they were not spies or foreign agents bent on destroying his army and its work.

Kitchener disliked the Press. He thought only of soldiers: he had no eye for publicity, and so far as the public and its interest was concerned he agreed whole-heartedly with the late Commodore Vanderbilt, the American Railway Czar, who, when reminded about what the public might say, brusquely waved that matter aside by saying, "The public? The public be damned!" That was Kitchener's view too, and he put as many obstacles in the way of War Correspondents as he could find. He relaxed a little after he knew his men. There were not many on the Nile and not so many more on the Veldt, so that by the end of the Boer campaign he was almost reconciled to those strange people, the journalists and their prying press.

Then came the Great War with its avalanche

of correspondents who poured across to France with the first shot.

"I will not have them," stormed the Dictator at the War Office. "Any correspondent caught in or near the lines or in the War zone will be arrested and locked up"; which was actually done. I had, for instance, considerable trouble in disentangling some of our best men from the meshes of the Provost Marshals' net in France. One or two were "Spurlos Versunken" for some time, comfortably incarcerated in local gaols on the Belgian frontier "By Order." We had to make a definite, decided and adamant frontal attack on the seemingly unbending Chief. He would not give in at first, but finally agreed and even went so far as to acquiesce in the establishment of a permanent Press Camp at General Headquarters with half a dozen chosen correspondents, ranking as officers, under military discipline, each to be in charge of a military escort officer who also acted as censor to accompany him wherever he chose to go. It was a great victory for the Press. Lord Kitchener was never quite happy about it, but in the end he began to see the value of Press co-operation and the benefits of

reliable and responsible publicity. I hardly believed my ears when at one of our conferences he went so far as to say that the assistance of the Press in all its various activities was beyond value, which "praise coming from Sir Hubert was praise indeed."

The next war—I presume that there will be one some day?—will probably give us war correspondence undreamed of. Our daily papers will be replete with televised photographs of bombing scenes and gas attacks, and the specials will probably fly home during and after actions to write a "lead" on the scenes just witnessed, and then go back again. It will be as different from our newspaper conduct of the Great War as the difference between 1914-18 and its predecessors.

I have sat fascinated while listening to the personal stories of Archibald Forbes, the great *Daily News* correspondent, recalling the scenes of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870; I have listened spellbound to Sir W. H. Russell, *The Times* correspondent of the Crimea, who "muck-raked" so effectively about the inadequate equipment of the troops that the Government had no other recourse than to take action at

once ; I have had the privilege of being told of eye-witness scenes in the War of Secession in America by Sir Henry M. Stanley, the man who said " Dr. Livingstone, I presume ? " ; and I have, myself, acted as an eye-witness writer of war-time actions. But none of these ever went beyond the mere recording of military facts and military speculation. There was none of the wide range of word-play which characterised the work of the Great War correspondents. I cannot imagine, for instance, anyone taking part in the scene at Kars, at Sevastopol or Tel-el-Kebir or even Larissa, writing home such highly successful and world-thrilling sob-stuff as that which came from the gifted pen of Sir Philip Gibbs on the Western Front in circumstances no less dangerous or onerous ; nor could it ever be imagined that the writings of Sir Percival Phillips or Sir W. Beach Thomas or Mr. Tomlinson would be eagerly devoured every morning by millions upon millions of eyes, whereas the war stories of Russell, Forbes, Kinnear, Burleigh and so on, though read with equal keenness sometimes a couple of weeks after the event, had not the tenth number of readers. Other times, other manners.

CHAPTER V

THE LAW AND LIBELS

THE reporting of Law cases has developed on much the same lines as the reporting of debates in Parliament. Thirty years ago the Law reports in the newspapers were usually written by lawyers, and the most important cases were reported practically verbatim. All that has now changed. It is the human drama of the Courts, and not legal technicalities, that interest the general public, and only those cases which have a sensational appeal, or in which questions touching the public welfare are involved, are reported at any length in the popular Press ; and the reports are written not by lawyers, but by journalists. This is another field which offers scope for the descriptive " sketch " writer.

Murder cases—especially *crimes passionnels* or those to which some mystery attaches, important libel actions, and charges of financial fraud receive the widest publicity in the Press. Until the law was passed prohibiting newspapers from printing accounts of proceedings in the Divorce Courts, even greater promin-

ence was given to divorce suits. All the newspapers filled their columns with verbatim reports of intimate matters, the publication of which was often embarrassing to both parties to the divorce. Many of the details printed were of a kind that, had they appeared in a work of fiction, would have been regarded as an outrage on public decency, and possibly have involved the author and publisher in trouble with the Public Prosecutor. There can be no doubt that this was a case in which Government interference with the free activities of the Press was amply justified. Public opinion was in favour of the reform, and practically all the reputable newspapers welcomed it. The habit had grown, and could only be checked if its discontinuance could be made general. So long as one paper opened its columns to what in newspaper parlance was known as "sewage," the others had to follow.

A word must here be said about the position of the Press in relation to the law of libel. Libel actions have played a large part in the history of journalism. In the old days, when the libel laws were ill-defined, and when journalists indulged in more vigorous pen-brawling

than is their practice to-day, the life of a newspaper was one long round of litigation. In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, for example, the laws were so vague, and administered with such caprice, that it was impossible to say which might or might not be interpreted as a libellous publication, and the harassed journalist never knew from one day to the next if he might not be suddenly arrested on a charge of printing and publishing a seditious or defamatory libel. Most enterprising newspaper-men of those days saw the inside of a prison at least once in the course of their adventurous lives.

To-day the position is different. Editors know exactly what constitutes a libel, and also the maze of legal technicalities which enshroud it. The question that usually faces them in any given case is, whether the public interest, or the moral position of their newspapers, justifies them in pursuing a course that may result in a libel action being brought against them in which, though morally in the right, they may perhaps be wrong on a point of law. Such cases constantly crop up in the conduct of a modern newspaper.

I will give you an illustration from my own

experience. Some time ago, in 1916, my newspaper attacked a "Home-making" project which was advertised in a most alluring fashion. You had to find a suitable name for a proposed model village, and if your guess was acceptable the promoters promised a plot of land as a prize. Every one of the thousands who sent in their guess was awarded a prize. The "winner" got his plot of land all right, but first had to send in £3 3s. to "cover the cost of transfer," although actually the stamp duty was not much more than sixpence, the rest going to the promoter for advertising and profit. I saw from the first that there was something unusual about this scheme, and when in due course the advertisement, to cost a considerable sum and covering much space, was offered to us, I directed the Advertisement Department to decline it. Then I attacked the project vigorously, declared it to be a "ramp," and suggested to all those who had "won" a plot of land that they should sue the promoter for recovery of the money; we would guarantee the cost of the action.

The result was that shoals of "winners" sued for recovery and were successful, but in

the meantime I had been guilty of "maintenance"—in other words, had financed litigations which did not concern me, and so I was held to be in the wrong. The case was complicated in the Courts by having a libel action attached to it, and it dragged its insane and expensive way through the corridors of the Law Courts, Appeal and all, until I was ready to vow never again to try to do anything in the public interest.

I often tried to catch the late Horatio Bottomley in the course of his pyrotechnics, but Bottomley was a sly rogue who knew more about the mysterious workings of the law of libel than any man in England. The late Mr. Justice McCardie, who was himself an expert on libel, maintained a similar view about Bottomley. Whenever I was on Bottomley's track he issued a writ for libel. He did not bring it into the Courts, but left it open; and as long as the writ remained open I could not continue my attacks without laying myself open to the charge of Contempt of Court. This law in regard to Contempt of Court was a most effective weapon with which to silence the Press, and Bottomley was a past-master in the

use of it. It has since been amended as the result of an important libel action in which the *Daily Express* was concerned.

It happened in this way. A certain agitator was making himself a nuisance by trying to maintain a strike among sailors and by using insulting language in regard to the King. I said : " This man ought to be stopped," and so inquired into his antecedents. We discovered him to be an impostor, and said so in the columns of the newspaper. The man promptly issued a writ for libel. Here, I felt, was a case in which public interest demanded that I should incur the risk of being had up for Contempt of Court. I repeated the exposure in spite of the writ and was promptly summoned for Contempt. The case was heard before a divisional Court of three judges led by the Lord Chief Justice. Our contention was that the man was a rogue and an impostor, and that he ought to be exposed as a public danger. Then for the first time the ruling was laid down that it does not constitute Contempt of Court to persist in a charge in face of a writ for libel ; the party who does so, however, incurs the risk of having to pay heavier damages

in the event of his losing the libel action when it is brought into the Courts ; but he is entitled to persist in his charge, since by so doing he may possibly be performing a public service. The ruling in this case has since served as a precedent in all such cases, and it is no longer possible for any one to find shelter under cover of a mere writ for libel.

It is sometimes said that the editors and proprietors of newspapers provoke libel actions for publicity purposes or to gratify personal feuds. This is not so. An action for libel is the last thing in the world that a newspaper wants. Anyone who gives the matter a moment's thought must realise that in nine cases out of ten a newspaper has far more to lose than to gain from litigation of this kind.

The trouble with libel actions from an editor's point of view is, that no matter how much he may know or feel himself to be in the right, he has always to contend with that strange human complex of the good and true men and women who constitute a jury. There appears to be some inexplicable desire to " take it out of " any newspaper the moment it comes before a jury, right or wrong. Whether it be the

innate advance sympathy in the hearts of all men and women for the lone fighting plaintiff, or a natural antagonism to the "rich and powerful Press," the fact remains that newspapers always fight a libel action with the initial disadvantage of having public feeling against them. Judges have often told me that they have never been able to understand the psychology of juries where libel actions are concerned. Editors know the position perfectly well, and even those people who deny a newspaper corporation a conscience, should at least credit it with a measure of practical sense. No, whatever may have been the case in the past, modern newspapers do not incur the risk of an action for libel without grave reasons. It simply does not pay them. In many cases where they do resolve to take this risk, it is done for the public good and to their own financial disadvantage.

CHAPTER VI

THE ILLUSTRATED DAILY PRESS

THE changes in the character and physical appearance of newspapers during the last thirty years have been so great and so many that a Rip van Winkle who fell asleep in his Club chair in 1900 and woke up to-day would think he was still dreaming when he picked up his newspaper in order to bring his mind back to the work-a-day world. No doubt the thing that would astonish him most would be their pictorial transformation. He would find in every paper he took up a large number of pictures. In many of them he would find the news treated pictorially, with photographic illustrations of persons, places and happenings interspersed everywhere in the text ; and in all of them, even the sedate *Times*, he would find at least one whole page devoted to illustrations, with pictorial advertisements, many of them coloured, confronting him on every page. Trying to remember what things were like before he dozed off, he would call to mind the existence of one illustrated daily paper called the *Daily Graphic*, quite an interesting and well-

behaved little journal if he remembered aright, but a solitary experiment in journalism and not of wide appeal ; somehow he rarely saw it, and anyhow it certainly did not suggest the journalistic transformation that now greeted him, nor did it bear the remotest resemblance to the new kind of daily picture papers like the *Daily Mirror* and the *Daily Sketch*, which he found had taken its place.

The development of the daily illustrated papers, like so many of the other great changes in journalism which I have had to record, was due again to the initiative of Alfred Harmsworth, Lord Northcliffe. With his usual prescience, Northcliffe saw that with the education and growing emancipation of women, the newspaper public of the future would consist largely of women readers. Accordingly, in 1902 he projected a daily illustrated paper called the *Mirror*, which was intended to be devoted exclusively to women. This enterprise was premature and failed. It was a surprisingly dull and unimpressive affair. Nothing daunted, he at once changed the whole plan of the paper. He converted it into an illustrated paper for the masses, and reduced its price to a halfpenny. Thus was

born the *Daily Mirror*. It was a sort of *Daily Mail* in pictures, only smaller in size, and its success was instantaneous over-night. It found an eager public among typists, shop-girls and clerks and all the bright young things in the merry-go-round of London's business world. It appealed, in fact, to much the same class of reader that Newnes and Pearson had catered for in *Tit-Bits* and *Pearson's Weekly*, and for whose benefit Harmsworth himself had already projected *Answers* and the *Daily Mail*.

Having launched the *Daily Mirror* successfully, Northcliffe lost interest in it and sold it to his brother Harold Harmsworth, now Lord Rothermere, who has ever since conducted it half as a newspaper and half as a financial trust. This needs brief explanation. The large profits earned by the *Daily Mirror* were invested in other newspaper companies, such as the *Daily Mail* Trust, Anglo-American paper mills and so on. Its financial holdings aside from the *Daily Mirror* are enormously profitable.

On its first appearance the *Daily Mirror* was greeted by the more educated sections of the newspaper public with the same toleration as the *Daily Mail* had been many years before.

There was some reason for the sneers, as it was certainly a crude production, whether regarded from the point of view of taste or technique. The quality of its reproductions could not compare with those of the *Daily Graphic*, the only other illustrated daily paper then in existence, while the nature of its appeal was, of course, on an altogether lower level. On the other hand, it was a financial success from the first, whereas the *Daily Graphic* was being run at a heavy loss amounting to as much as a thousand pounds a week. And this was the important point. It showed that once again the House of Harmsworth had correctly gauged the possibilities of a new journalistic venture, and the paper having thus proved itself to be a sound investment, money was poured out lavishly to improve its technical presentation and to raise the quality of its appeal. Soon the sneering ceased, and the *Daily Mirror* was accorded its place on the map of respectable journalism.

Lord Rothermere had early called to his aid to act as Editor of the *Daily Mirror* a highly trained and talented journalist named Alexander Kenealy. I had known him as a colleague in

the far-off *New York Herald* days and afterwards on the *Daily Express*. In both offices he had distinguished himself by his originality of outlook, his mordant wit and his unusual range of worldly knowledge. He was a son of the famous Dr. Kenealy, M.P., the brilliant but eccentric advocate who had ruined himself in defending Arthur Orton, the astonishing Tichborne claimant whose antics engrossed the attention of the Law Courts and of Society for many months. Incidentally I remember, in company with Alexander Kenealy, going into a Bowery saloon for a glass of beer one hot afternoon in the 'nineties. There behind the bar stood the burly Arthur Orton, the quondam Sir Roger Tichborne. He had served a long term of imprisonment in England and emigrated to America.

"I would have won my case," he said, "but for those dreadful newspapers which let no opportunity go to pry into my past and to print what they knew about me. The newspapers are a curse!"

Not only the Tichborne claimant but other more or less famous people have made similar declarations in the course of years.

Meanwhile the *Daily Mirror* having forged ahead so magnificently, it was time for the fledgeling to spread its wings. So it gradually but most effectively began to invade the Midlands and the North ; straight into the hitherto unchallenged Hulton territory. In Manchester there " sat pretty " Mr., afterwards Sir Edward Hulton, with his powerful group of papers, the *Despatch*, the *Daily Sketch*, the *Umpire* and so on. Money-making was a Hulton attribute, but he was also to be credited with the production of some good newspapers. Mr. Hulton did not like the intrusion in his field, so he came to London with the *Daily Sketch*, a tabloid rival of the *Mirror*. Presently he also bought what was left of the once-powerful *Standard*. The morning editions had been discontinued, the evening edition remained under the *ægis* of Mr. Davison Dalziel, afterwards Lord Dalziel of Wooller, one of the most amazing and facile personalities that ever went into and out of Fleet Street. Sandwiched in between all this competition there was still the *Daily Graphic* amiably, affably and unconcernedly plodding along, now under the control of the brothers Berry. Also there was the *Sunday Pictorial*

which Lord Rothermere had created at a few days' notice ; he put down £25,000 for display advertising, announced the publications for the next Sunday and got his initial outlay back in the course of a month ! He had the machines, the premises, the staff, the organisation. All he had to do was to supply a title and publish on an additional day. Sir Edward Hulton produced in reply an identical rival, called it the *Sunday Herald* and made a similar financial success. Later, when the brothers Berry took over the Hulton interests, they discarded the kindly, uncomplaining old *Daily Graphic*, and changed the name of the *Sunday Herald* to *Sunday Graphic*. They were obviously disinclined to continue any longer than was possible their connection with a name so closely associated with ideas of Socialism ; for in the meantime the Socialists had launched the *Daily Herald* on their own, irrespective of their Sunday namesake.

By the time all these changes had come about it was clear that the popular illustrated Press had come to stay, and its further expansion was only a question of time. As Northcliffe had foreseen, the great bulk of its support came from

the new public of women readers. It was not, I think, an historical accident that the growth in the public demand for picture papers should have followed closely on the development of the Cinema. A public accustomed to having stories and topical news supplied to it in the form of pictures on the screen, naturally develops a taste for pictorial journalism. The newspapers were not slow to respond to this new demand. They began to devote a special page, or double page, exclusively to pictures relating to the day's news, and the more popular journals started breaking up their reading columns with photographic illustrations. To-day practically every important newspaper in this country, and especially in the United States, has its picture page as a matter of course.

It is strange that the vogue of the small illustrated daily, like the *Mirror* and *Sketch*, should have its origin not in America, where these things usually grow, but in this country. True, there was once in New York, half a century ago, a "tabloid" daily called the *Graphic*, built much on the same lines as its English sister, but that too went overboard in the course of time, unable to keep itself afloat in

the Yellow Sea of the late 'eighties. Then after the Rothermere enterprise in London had made its phenomenal success, the idea was copied in America, and the rich harvest was duplicated. The first attempt was made by the proprietors of the *Chicago Tribune* shortly after the War was over. They introduced to New York the *Daily News*, a tiny "tabloid" packed with sensational pictures. They had so much surplus profits that they could afford to experiment, and this they did with a vengeance. New York has seen a great many sensational papers, but nothing that the Pulitzers or Hearst had ever projected had a chance beside this chiaroscuro visitation. It was such a great success that its inevitable imitators appeared at once on the field and out-yellowed the original. The "tabloid" of America, besides marking a further step into the morass of the most flagrant kind of sensationalism, provided subject-matter for a series of plays and Cinema plots in which flash-light reporters with harsh faces and huge cigars stuck in their mouths, and with language of the weirdest fashion, were featured as representing the new journalism. The "tabloids" of Great Britain have something to learn in the

matter of vulgarity and bad form ; and please God they will never learn.

Needless to say the quality of reproduction has improved enormously since the early days of the *Daily Mirror*. Repeated experiment has brought the technique of printing photographs at top-speed to a high state of perfection, and there has been a corresponding development in all the processes connected with the art of photography itself. Among the latest triumphs of the illustrated daily Press is the printing of advertisements in colour, an innovation started in England by several papers though long practised in America. Doubtless in a short time this will become general everywhere.

Probably, however, the most important of recent developments is wireless photography. This marvellous invention is still in its infancy and has not reached the relative excellence now attained by telephotography. Wireless pictures are at present rough and indistinct, and they are printed as an interesting experiment rather than for the satisfactory results they give. They are rapidly improving, however, and I have no doubt that before long they will have become a commonplace of daily journalism.

The *Daily Mirror* revolutionised the character of the illustrated Press just as the *Daily Mail* revolutionised the character of the ordinary newspaper. It dealt a severe blow to the great illustrated weeklies, the full force of which was not immediately felt, but which has none the less proved deadly. At first the great illustrated news-weeklies of that time, journals like the *Illustrated London News*, the *Graphic*, *Black and White* and the *Sphere*, could afford to ignore the new challenge. Not only were their illustrations infinitely superior to anything the *Daily Mirror* could produce, but they appealed to a different class of reader. The same remark applies to papers like the *Queen*, which had been the leading ladies' paper since its foundation in 1861, or the *Field*, the old-established weekly organ of the country gentleman. It was not until later, when the movement towards pictorial journalism inaugurated by the *Daily Mirror* had become general, that these journals felt to the full its damaging effects.

The illustrated weeklies of the beginning of the century were all serious, high-class productions which appealed exclusively to the upper and middle classes. The oldest of these, the

Illustrated London News, which was established in 1842, was proud of its traditions, and never fell below its own high standard, and its later rivals, the *Graphic* and the *Sphere*, were in no way inferior to it in all-round excellence. Their principal pictures were drawn by brilliant draughtsmen, many of whom, like Melton Prior of the *Illustrated London News*, for example, achieved world-wide fame for their skill in this kind of work, and their camera-work and printed reproductions were as good as the technical processes of the times could make them. With the possible exception of the Paris *L'Illustration*, they had no rival in the illustrated Press of the world. They also provided first-rate reading matter, their weekly contributors including some of the most distinguished journalists of the day.

In spirit they were uniformly serious and dignified. They clung tenaciously to the Victorian tradition of journalism, and with the partial exception of the *Sphere*, which, as a late-comer—it made its first appearance in 1899 under that versatile genius Clement Shorter—naturally struck a more modern note than the others, they made no concession to the lighter

journalistic fashions that had begun to show themselves towards the end of the nineteenth century. Their proprietors, however, were alive to the new tendencies, and in order to keep pace with them they started lighter pendant publications, which treated the news and topics of the week in the bright gossipy fashion of the society journal. The first of these was the *Sketch*, which was founded by the proprietors of the *Illustrated London News* in 1892. The *Tatler*, which was an offshoot of the *Sphere*, appeared in 1901, and two years later the *Graphic* gave birth to the *Bystander*. In the quality of their illustrations and in their artistic make-up, these lighter illustrated weeklies (even the *Sketch*, which in its first few numbers shocked Victorian respectability by its daring and frivolity) were on the same level as their parent journals; and like them they circulated almost exclusively among the middle and upper classes, a remark which applies to all the illustrated papers of the period which were of any account in journalism.

The development of the daily illustrated Press has affected the position of the illustrated weeklies in two ways. In the first place, the illustrations of topical events provided by these

weekly journals have lost the value of newness by the time the reader sees them. They may still be technically and artistically superior to anything that the daily Press is able to provide. They undoubtedly are. But the fact remains that the reader is now supplied with a pictorial commentary on each day's news in his morning newspaper, and the pictures he finds in the *Weekly Illustrated* are merely repetitions on a higher artistic level of those he has already seen day by day during the week. Hence he no longer looks forward to his illustrated paper at the end of the week with nearly the same eagerness as formerly. In fact, if it comes to the point, he finds he can do without it.

In the second place, the value of the draughtsman in illustrative journalism has been seriously discounted by the immense strides made in recent years by the art of photography. The daily Press has, of course, to rely entirely on the camera for its pictures. The pride of the illustrated weekly journals used to be in the fine work of their draughtsmen, and now that the photograph has superseded the drawing, the main source of their appeal has vanished. It cannot be denied that the camera has decided

advantages over the draughtsman from the point of view of a News journal. Not only is it infinitely quicker and cheaper, but in its function of illustrating the News it is more accurate and reliable. A photograph is true to actual facts down to the smallest detail; the drawing may not be, and almost certainly is not. Naturally, from the point of view of imaginative truth, the drawing is immeasurably superior. By selection of detail and imaginative insight the artist can give his picture a dramatic intensity and a high poetic reality that are beyond the scope of any camera. That goes without saying. But I am speaking here purely as a journalist, and from the journalistic point of view, and having regard to the conditions of modern newspaper production, the camera has advantages over the draughtsman which cannot be gainsaid. Perhaps the illustrated weeklies would have served their own interests better if they had disregarded these advantages, and boldly continued to base their appeal on the brilliant work of their draughtsmen. In this way they would have still been able to offer the public something of real artistic value which the daily Press with all its enterprise can never give. Instead, they have gradually

abandoned the drawing for the photograph, and admirable though their camera work is, it does not differentiate them from the illustrated daily Press. Thus they have abandoned their one distinctive source of appeal.

All things considered, it is surprising that the serious illustrated weeklies have been able to hold their own as well as they have done against the challenge of the popular picture newspaper. It is true that the *Graphic* (like the *Daily Graphic*) has ceased publication, but the *Illustrated London News* and the *Sphere* still manage to keep up their circulations, owing mainly to their exceptionally high character and their devotion to illustrated science. I do not think, however, that the future of the weekly illustrated Press lies with the national news-weekly as exemplified by these journals. It will be rather with the lighter society journals and with the papers that appeal to special groups and interests. I expect to see a rapid increase in publications of this kind during the next few years, especially in those intended for women.

CHAPTER VII

THE GROWTH OF THE SUNDAY PRESS

THE Sunday Press, which is a distinct and separate industry, displays an even greater change than the daily Press as compared with the days of my youth. It is entirely a development of the past twenty-five or thirty years. I was sent to London in September 1890 by Mr. James Gordon Bennett, the eccentric proprietor of the *New York Herald*, to conduct the obsequies of the daily London edition of that great newspaper. It had lost steadily during the two years of its zigzag existence in England, and there was no reason at all why it should live. There were, indeed, in those days many more Americans in London than now, most of them engaged in the exploitation of mines, good, bad and non-existent, or the promotion of railways across the primeval prairie lands of the West. But they did not number enough to make the paper pay and so, without notice, I was lifted out of my comfortable editorial chair of the evening edition, the *Telegram*, and told to go at once to London and do some newspaper killing. Incidentally,

Mr. Bennett stated that there was a Sunday edition ; that it was also losing money, but that its novel appearance seemed to give it hope of succeeding at some time or other. " Anyhow," said the proprietor, " it only loses a couple of hundred pounds a week, and that is a bagatelle compared to the greedy maw of the daily." Therefore he gave me discretionary powers with regard to the Sunday edition. I kept that Sunday edition going, and then, one day, five or six months later, I made an actual profit of £9 on the week ! It was the first time that Bennett had such an experience with his European ventures either in Paris or London. At once I received a telegram from Paris as follows :

" Congratulate you on having made a profit at last. Stop the paper at once. Close the office. Dismiss everybody."

That was the end of the London edition of the *New York Herald*. When it closed it had a circulation of nearly 60,000, which, I think, was more than the combined circulations of four other Sunday papers then running, namely, the *Observer*, the *Weekly Despatch*, *Reynolds's*

Newspaper and the *Sunday Times*. Look at them now ! There were various others of exceptional range. *Lloyd's Weekly* and the *People* both ran towards and over the million ; and there was the *Referee*, which was read by the young bloods to the extent of 100,000 copies every Sunday. That was considered enormous. The difficulty as to circulation was the inadequacy of transport. The railways usually shut down at 10 p.m. on Saturday night and did very little, if any, carrying in the early hours. The old Jacobean laws against Sunday trading were vigorously enforced in most provincial places, and altogether the public was little interested either in world news, which now absorbs so much Sunday attention, or in special reading matter, which was then sparse and yet unorganised. I had introduced a certain amount of theatre gossip, as it was then already the custom in the American Sunday Press, but I had to retire from the field too early with my £9 profit to be in any way effective or an influence towards change.

The two " high-brows," the *Observer* and the *Sunday Times*, were merely reproductions of the " heavies " of the previous day ; per-

haps a trifle heavier, and they were always in deep financial distress. One day I had a call from Mr. Bouchier F. Hawksley, then one of the foremost of London solicitors. He was the legal representative of Cecil Rhodes and Dr. Jameson, and of the Chartered Company. He had many interests in his hands and among others he wanted to sell the *Observer*. He offered it to me for £5,000, lock, stock and barrel. There was, of course, not much lock, very little stock, and you could not see the barrel. I told him that I would not like to give more than £5,000 if he threw in the *Sunday Times* as well. Quick as lightning Mr. Hawksley came back with "All right. I will let you have the two for £5,000."

Even then I was not tempted. Many years afterwards, just before the War, I was interested in some negotiations which resulted in the *Sunday Times* being transferred to the brothers Berry for close on £100,000, which, in view of subsequent developments, turned out to be a ridiculously low price; while at the same time Lord Astor's investment in the *Observer* has netted him every year a most picturesque profit. Yet Lord Northcliffe, who

had dabbled in the *Observer*, could not make it go.

As for the *News of the World*, once a Fleet Street step-child, badly shod and poorly fed, its astonishing progress from poverty to prosperity may be traced distinctly to the moment when Mr. George Riddell (now Lord Riddell), an industrious lawyer, began to take an interest in it. It was for a long time the step-child of Fleet Street. Then it became the Bad Boy of Alsatia, and people held up their hands. All the time Mr. Riddell was at work perfecting the machine, looking after the distribution of the paper, tightening up, expanding, applying methods akin to those of Big Business. A million, two million, three million. People said the *News of the World* had its circulation because of its predilection for salacious details of divorce litigation. Then, to confound them, Lord Riddell stepped in and backed the Bill which restricted the reporting of divorce cases ! People said " Riddell is sunk. His paper cannot keep its millions." The Bill was passed and became law. The *News of the World* had about 2,000,000 when this happened. Now it has an additional million. Why ? The fact is

that the *News of the World* is an uncommonly good newspaper ; always has been, and aside from its business management is about as perfect as any organisation can be made.

Lord Northcliffe took over the *Weekly Dispatch* and worked hard on it. He finally had the satisfaction of seeing it pass the million mark. The paper was going a good deal like a motor-car which misses fire unexpectedly. Mr. Hannen Swaffer, the nearest thing to the Georgian and Queen Anne Fleet-streeters, a gifted "columnist" as well as a first-rate reporter and editor, took charge of its destinies for a while and invested it with the spirit that one expects from Swafferism. You may like Swaffer or detest him—the fact is he is a great journalist. He makes people think and he makes them talk. *Quien sabe?* But Swaffer had the inevitable argument with his magnificent Chief and so he became a reporter again. Then for a term of years the editorial control fell into the hands of Mr. Bernard Falk, another real and not sham journalist ; a man who knows. The result is that the *Weekly Dispatch*, now the *Sunday Dispatch*, is a valuable property which struggles manfully with the

Sunday Express for the leadership of the *jeunesse dorée*.

The *Sunday Express*, too, has a history, though only a short one. It owes its inception solely to the driving power of the amazing Lord Beaverbrook. We had got to the end of the War. We of the *Daily Express* felt all along that we had not rounded out our establishment without owning a Sunday edition. We had the chance just before the War to acquire the *Sunday Times*, but for various reasons we let that go. During the War we were forbidden to start new papers and so we had to hold our hand. But when the War was over and hardly a moment after Lord Ashfield, who was President of the Board of Trade, had given his official sanction, we were on the bills, so to speak, with the *Sunday Express*. It was not an instantaneous success. Far from it. We tried too hard with a new idea. We had to learn. It is fourteen years since the *Sunday Express* was launched. Lord Beaverbrook has stuck to his creation with the devotion of an Acadian mother for its child. He never leaves it out of his sight. It was his drive and persistence that, for example, invented Lord

Castlerosse, made a gossip writer an uncommonly of him, kept this, the world's lap, been, and aside with a pen in his hand, and in this about as per-the million circulation alongside made. skilled rival.

In the meantime, the old *People's Weekly Dispatch* finally had scored the million forty years and the million down again to an insignificant figure. A good deal like the hands of that astonishing juggler, unexpectedly. lations, Mr. J. S. Elias, whose principle, owing to the managing-director of a printing business, a streeters, a controls the *Daily Herald*, John Butler, first-rate *People* is to see how many articles of destinies less value he may load on your shoulders, spirit that how many money prizes he may lay down, lay like lap in return for your devotion in buying a great papers. Mr. Elias is the lineal descendant, and he Autolycus. The *People* now has a circulation of over 3,000,000 on Sundays. Thin swaffer forests that have to be devastated to again. the greed of Mr. Autolycus Elias' control tions! I remember the *People* in the other off days of 1890 when its principal appeal, who a nice little gossip column written by his- Joseph Hatton, author-critic-editor. It, ple widely read, but there was never anything

Sunday like as the pen pirouettings of the *jeunesse dorée* of Donegall, or so sardonic and

The *Sunday* the Castlerossian rhodomontade. though only a "ette Papers" of the *People* were solely to the de, proper dissertations. R.I.P.

Beaverbrook. lost forgotten a Sunday paper which War. We oge and intelligent appeal. It was that we had, O'Connor's *Sunday Sun*, in which without owe acreage of two pages the redoubt- the chance ay Pay" utilised pen, typewriter, *Sunday Tind* paste-pot in the successful effort that go. " the book of the week. Never was to start nman who could do that so efficaciously hand. Biciently. The book reviews of the a momen *Sun* were masterpieces of work-a-day dent of ism. I know of no one in the modern official s who has the same gift as "Tay Pay" speak, wing the inside out of a volume, telling an instary, displaying the mind of the author, if tried too such a thing, and leaving the reader learn. tly satisfied. I say no one, except per- *Express* Mr. Sidney Dark, the present Editor of stuck *Church Times*, whom I have had the pleasure Acadi serving at work in his capacity of all- it outd journalist, whether it be to "gut" a sister, write the story of a boxing match, hustle

against the printer's call at one in the morning a three-quarter column dramatic criticism, or indite a considered leading article on the Epistle to the Romans.

That is the sort of journalism to encourage. I like to see a reporters' room full of bright-eyed youths with old Etonian ties, but I would prefer to see them all equipping themselves for a profession which makes an enormous but generously requited call on the capacities and efforts of all its devotees. If the journalism of to-day were peopled with more all-round practitioners the daily, the weekly and the Sunday Press would be even better than it is.

CHAPTER VIII

NEWSPAPER DYNASTIES

No survey of the contemporary Press can be complete without a brief account of the various newspaper dynasties that have risen to power during the last forty years. The growth, rivalries, groupings, affiliations and mergings of these dynasties have been the chief factors in the history of newspaper organisation in our time. Formerly a newspaper was the property of an individual or family. To-day individual ownership has given place to corporate ownership. The editor-proprietor has nearly disappeared. The newspaper has become a limited company and is the property of a multitude of shareholders. The growth of competition among these financial companies has led to frequent groupings and mergings, the tendency being for the larger newspapers to swallow up the smaller in the same field, and for rival dynasties to group their interests and form themselves into a single trust. It has been the era of amalgamation and trustification in journalism no less than in the world of trade and industry. The chain-shop, the multiple-

store, mass production, the industrial cartel have their exact parallels in the development of newspaper enterprise.

It is not my purpose to trace the growth of the chief group interests which control the majority of our newspapers to-day. The structure of these formations is exceedingly complex. Each consists of a number of great dynastic houses, which are themselves large financial trusts made up in many cases of smaller groupings merged together in successful amalgamations. Moreover, the companies in one group often possess large holdings in the companies of another, and this makes the financial chart more complicated than ever. Instead, therefore, of bewildering the reader with a detailed account of the dynastic growth and the various affiliations and ramifications of these great newspaper corporations, I shall merely enumerate the chief groupings that exist to-day, and mention some of the leading personalities associated with them.

The greater part of the newspaper enterprise in this country is controlled by the following six groups and their connections.

I. THE ROTHERMERE GROUP.—This is the

richest and the most powerful of the great newspaper dynasties. It is also one of the earliest of those that have sprung up under the new order. Its founder was, of course, Lord Rothermere's eldest brother, Lord Northcliffe, and its present mammoth development under the *ægis* of Lord Rothermere—whose financial genius was always the perfect complement of his brother's genius for journalism—represents the latter-day expansion of the original House of Harmsworth. The foundation of the Harmsworth dynasty was laid with the publication of *Answers* in 1888. It was consolidated by the establishment of the *Daily Mail* in 1896. The humble experiment of *Answers*, which was started as a rival of *Tit-Bits*, subsequently developed into the Amalgamated Press, probably the largest periodical business in the world. It is interesting to note, as an example of the changes of ownership to which the large newspaper trusts are subject, that the Amalgamated Press has passed out of the hands of its founders and is now controlled by the Berry Group.

The chief companies forming the Rothermere Group are Associated Newspapers (which

is closely linked up with the *Daily Mail* Trust), Northcliffe Newspapers, *Daily Mirror* Newspapers and Sunday Pictorial Newspapers. All these companies are inter-connected financially, and have large holdings in other companies as well. The London newspapers published by this group are the *Daily Mail*, the *Evening News*, the *Daily Mirror*, the *Sunday Dispatch* and the *Sunday Pictorial*.

The Harmsworth dynasty is particularly interesting partly owing to the dynamic personalities of the two great men who founded it and have controlled its destinies during the forty years of its existence, and partly owing to the fact that a large family circle has been associated with its development. It was and is essentially a family affair, and it shows every sign of remaining so in the future. Alfred Harmsworth was the eldest of seven brothers, and it was on the firm rock of this brotherhood—each member of which has been in some way or other actively connected with the newspaper enterprises of the two eldest—that the House of Harmsworth has been built. The fine resounding old names—Harold, Cecil, Hildebrand, Aubrey, Leicester, St. John, Vyvyan—

with which the brothers were endowed, might of themselves have been taken as an augury of the subsequent splendour of the family fortunes.

The Harmsworth brotherhood used to be a constant theme for jest among the staffs of their newspapers. The jokes were always based on the number of brothers. I remember once when I was News Editor of the *Daily Mail* we had a bright young reporter fresh from Cambridge in the reporters' room. Northcliffe, who had a habit of exalting young men for a day and then dropping them and forgetting all about them, happened to come in while this new recruit was there, and liking the look of him, he told me to send him up to his room. He then told him what a bright young fellow he was and invited him to dinner at his house in Berkeley Square. He gave his new protégé an excellent dinner and proceeded to outline to him the marvellous career that lay before him.

"You are just the type of man I want," he told him; "just do as I tell you and you will be at the top of the tree in no time. Marlowe and Blumenfeld and Watney are good, but

they are not so good as you. You'll do far better. I can get five thousand writing men to work for me at any time, but I can't get the man who has just the qualities and personality I want. You are the very man I am looking for. You just go on as you are and your time will come," and so on.

The young man floated home in a glory of visions. Next morning he came to the office bubbling over with excitement. Too eager to wait for the lift, he rushed up the stairs two at a time, and unhappily bumped right into Northcliffe. The great man turned on him in a fury and asked him who the devil he was, knocking into people like that. "Why, sir, I am C . . ." said the abashed young man, expecting instant recognition.

"I don't know you, have never seen you," thundered Northcliffe, and went on down the stairs. C . . . went to the reporters' room looking terribly glum and crestfallen. Charles Balch, an American "stunt merchant" who was in charge of the "Absent-minded Beggar Fund" which had been started about that time to give delicacies to the troops in South Africa, seeing that something was wrong, went up to

him. "Say, young fellow, what's the matter with you?" he asked. C . . . told his story.

"Why," said Balch, "you ought to have said to him, 'Say, Chief, don't you know me? I'm one of your brothers.'"

II. THE BERRY GROUP.—Like the Rothermere Group, this group owes its existence to the practical genius and financial enterprise of two brothers, William Ewart Berry (now Lord Camrose) and Sir James Gomer Berry, Bart. The Berry brothers began in the obscurity of provincial Wales, but their remarkable *flair* for the business side of journalism was not long in showing itself. Starting with the *Advertising World*, which was founded by Mr. William Berry in 1901, they have built up by successive acquisitions, expansions and amalgamations, the most widespread group of newspapers in the country. They laid the foundations of their power in the newspaper world by acquiring the *Sunday Times*, the *Financial Times* and the *Daily Graphic*. In 1924 they expanded their interests by the purchase of the Hulton newspapers, for which they paid £5½ million. In the following year they acquired valuable newspaper properties in Glasgow and

Newcastle, and shortly afterwards consolidated their position still further by buying from Lord Rothermere the *Daily Sketch*—in which they merged the *Daily Graphic*—and the *Sunday Graphic*. At the same time they entered into the periodical field by purchasing the Amalgamated Press, for which they paid the large sum of £8 million. Finally, in 1927, in conjunction with Sir Edward (now Lord) Iliffe, they took over the *Daily Telegraph* from the late Lord Burnham.

Among the companies controlled by the Berry interests are Allied Newspapers Ltd. (which in turn controls Allied Northern Newspapers Ltd.), the Amalgamated Press Ltd., the Financial Times Ltd., and Kelly's Directories (which owns a controlling interest in the Associated Iliffe Press and, through that Company, in Iliffe and Sons Ltd., the chief publishers of periodicals dealing with motoring, wireless, photography, yachting, etc.). The London newspapers published by this group are the *Daily Telegraph*, the *Sunday Times*, the *Financial Times*, the *Daily Sketch* and the *Sunday Graphic*. It also controls (through Allied Newspapers Ltd.) a host of provincial

morning and evening newspapers. When in 1929 Lord Rothermere launched Northcliffe Newspapers Ltd., something like a "provincial war" started between that enterprise and Allied Newspapers. Subsequently a kind of truce was arranged between the two groups on the basis of a "gentleman's agreement" to respect each other's territory. Both sides had in the meantime lost enormous sums.

III. INVERESK GROUP.—This group started in 1926, when Mr. William Harrison, a sudden meteor from the provinces, at that time Chairman of the Inveresk Paper Company, invaded the newspaper business by acquiring and amalgamating under the title of Illustrated Newspapers Ltd., almost all the fashionable illustrated periodicals. In 1928 it acquired control through the Daily Chronicle Investment Corporation of United Newspapers Ltd., a combine which owned the *Daily Chronicle* and the *Sunday News*, and a number of important provincial newspapers. The *Daily Chronicle* was subsequently acquired by the *Daily News*, the two papers being merged into one under the title of *News-Chronicle*, which became the joint property of United Newspapers Ltd. and

News and Westminster Ltd. Through its control of United Newspapers Ltd. and Provincial Newspapers Ltd. the Inveresk group is a rival of the Rothermere, Camrose and Starmer groups in the provincial field, but not so powerful as it was intended that it should be. Harrison, the amiable promoter, was an unusual sort of person even for Fleet Street. He knew nothing about newspapers, and when he came down it was like the stick of a rocket.

IV. STARMER GROUP.—The late Sir Charles Walter Starmer was the Managing Director of a number of newspaper companies in the North and Midlands. He published in all thirty provincial daily and weekly newspapers. Among the chief companies associated with this group is the Westminster Press Ltd., of which the late Lord Cowdray was Chairman of Directors.

V. ODHAMS GROUP.—Among the chief newspapers and periodicals owned or controlled by Odhams Press Ltd., whose managing director is Mr. J. S. Elias, are the *Daily Herald*, the *People*, *John Bull*, the *Ideal Home*, the *Passing Show* and *Sporting Life*. Odhams Press acquired control of the *Daily Herald* in 1929, converting it from a purely class organ into a

national newspaper. Within a few months its circulation passed the million mark, and now, rivalling even the *Daily Express*, it has a circulation of two million—largely built up by an unblushing exploitation of the prize-coupon, in which pernicious system Odhams had for long led the way.

VI. BEAVERBROOK GROUP.—Unlike the other great Press magnates Lord Beaverbrook does not extend the ramifications of his control by acquiring large newspaper properties all over the country. He is content with the control of three newspapers, the *Daily Express*, the *Evening Standard* and the *Sunday Express*—a morning paper, an evening paper and a Sunday paper. Instead of starting or purchasing other newspapers in the industrial North, he has preferred to issue Manchester and Glasgow editions of the *Daily Express*. But though his newspapers are few, their influence is as powerful as that of any of the multiple combines. This is partly because Lord Beaverbrook impresses his personality on his newspapers in a way that the other great newspaper proprietors do not. While they are primarily concerned with newspaper enterprise on its financial side,

he is mainly interested in it as a means of impressing his views on the community, and of organising public opinion in the direction he wants it to go. He shares with Lord Northcliffe and Lord Rothermere the distinction of being one of the three most potent personal forces in twentieth-century popular journalism. He differs from them, however, in one important respect. Except towards the end of his career Northcliffe hardly ever wrote in his own newspapers or allowed his name to be mentioned in them. Lord Rothermere has generally followed the same principle; it is only on rare occasions that a signed article or letter by him appears in any of his journals. Lord Beaverbrook, on the other hand, freely uses the columns of his newspapers for the personal expression of views. Thus his proprietorship possesses a more personal, one might almost say a more editorial, character than that of the other great Press Lords.

The passing of newspaper ownership into the hands of a few dominant combines as represented by the above six groups has been largely a post-war development. With the mammoth circulations that have grown up since the War,

the amalgamation of newspaper interests which began as soon as the Press became a field for financial exploitation was accelerated. Probably not less than £100,000,000 is invested in newspaper properties to-day, and, in common with every other great industry, newspaper production is now undergoing a drastic process of "rationalisation." Some of the pioneer dynasties of the new commercial Press, which flourished at the beginning of the century, have disappeared, or they maintain only a merged or submerged existence. Thus there has been a fusion between the Newnes and Pearson dynasties which now exist as George Newnes, Ltd., under the Chairmanship of Lord Riddell, the chief proprietor of the *News of the World*.

Of the old historic family dynasties none now survives in the Metropolitan Press. The most famous of them, the Walter dynasty of *The Times*, virtually came to an end in 1908, when the control of the paper passed into the hands of Lord Northcliffe, the then proprietor, Mr. Arthur Walter, great-grandson of the founder, becoming Chairman of the Company that was created to carry it on. It was really the continuation under a new name of the

Universal Register started years before. The reasons for the change of name are amusingly given in the announcement that appeared in the first number of *The Times* on January 1st, 1788.

The *Universal Register*, from the moment of its first appearance to the day of its confirmation, has, like Tristram, suffered from unusual casualties, both laughable and serious, arising from its name, which, on its introduction, was immediately curtailed of its fair proportion by all who called for it, the word "Universal" being universally omitted, and the word "Register" being only retained. "Boy, bring me the *Register*!" The waiter answers, "Sir, we have not a library, but you may see it at the New Exchange coffee-house." "Then I'll see it there," answers the disappointed politician, and he goes to the New Exchange and calls for the *Register*, upon which the waiter tells him he cannot have it as he is not a subscriber, and presents him with *The Court and City Register*, the old *Annual Register* or the *New Annual Register*, or, if the coffee-house be within the purlieu of Covent Garden or the hundred of Drury, slips into the politician's hand *Harris's Register for Ladies*. For these and other reasons the parents of the *Universal Register* have added to its original name that of *The Times*, which, being a monosyllable, bids defiance to corrupters and mutilators of the language.

Except during the minority of John Walter the third, the proprietors of *The Times* formed a continuous dynasty in the Walter family until the acquisition of the paper by Lord Northcliffe. It is interesting to note too that the paper is still printed at Printing House Square, the spot where it was originally started.

To-day *The Times* is controlled by Major Astor, one of the representatives of the Astor dynasty which is now in its second generation. This dynasty started in 1892, when the late Mr. William Waldorf Astor, who subsequently became Viscount Astor, acquired control of the *Pall Mall Gazette*. It now continues in two branches. Viscount Astor, the eldest son of the first Viscount, owns the *Observer*, and his younger brother, Major the Hon. John Astor, is the chief proprietor of *The Times*. The Walter family, however, is still associated with *The Times*, as Mr. John Walter (the fifth in descent from the first John Walter) is one of the directors and part-proprietor.

The Burnham dynasty, which shed lustre on English journalism for three generations, has

likewise come to an end. As we have seen, in 1927 the late Lord Burnham sold the *Daily Telegraph* to the Berry Group. He had previously brought his nephew Colonel Fred Lawson into the paper, intending that he should continue the dynasty, but a concatenation of circumstances compelled him to alter his plans. As, however, Colonel Lawson is now General Manager of the *Daily Telegraph*, the family still maintains its connection with the great paper it created.

Apart from *The Times*, the only London morning newspapers that are independent of the combines are the *Morning Post* and the *Daily Worker*, the eldest and the youngest of the Metropolitan dailies. The *Morning Post* was founded in 1772. Unlike *The Times*, however, it could never boast of a continuous dynasty of proprietors, but has changed hands several times. It is now owned by a company under the Chairmanship of Sir Percy E. Bates.

The era of amalgamations has seen a great reduction in the number of newspapers. Thirty years ago London had nine evening papers; to-day it has only three. The *Echo* and the

Sun disappeared early in the century, and at about the same time the *St. James's Gazette* was merged into the *Evening Standard*. Since the War, the *Westminster Gazette* and the old-established *Globe* (which dated back to 1807) have both gone, and the *Pall Mall Gazette* has followed the *St. James's Gazette* into the expansive embrace of the *Evening Standard*. So that now there remain only three evening newspapers—the *Evening Standard*, the *Evening News* and the *Star*—to cater for the eight million public of the Metropolis.

There has also been considerable mortality among the London morning papers. The *Standard* and the *Daily Graphic* are defunct, and the *Morning Leader*, the *Westminster Gazette* (which had a brief existence as a morning paper after the end of its evening career) and the *Daily Chronicle* have each been devoured by the insatiable *Daily News*, which incidentally also owns the *Star*.

It is a remarkable thing in view of the vast developments that have taken place in journalism since 1800, that almost as many daily papers, morning and evening—about a dozen in all—existed in London at that date as are

published to-day. While circulations have increased a hundredfold, even a thousandfold, the number of newspapers is approximately the same as at the dawn of the modern era of newspaper expansion.

CHAPTER IX

FLEET STREET

THERE is probably no street in the world that has been more written about than the quarter-mile of thoroughfare which runs slightly up-hill from Ludgate Circus to the Griffin at Chancery Lane. Fleet Street never loses its appeal both to its denizens and to those of the outer circle. Piccadilly belongs to the world ; Fifth Avenue is an open road for all who care to stroll past its magnificent shop fronts ; the Champs Élysées is a picturesque avenue besought of foreigners ; and the Rialto of Venice still conjures up visions of Shakespearean magnificence. But there is and has been only one Fleet Street. It has withstood the encroachments of Time. Its ghosts are faithful to its pavements. If you shut your eyes and have the quality of a dreamer you can easily call forth that roistering Fleet-streeter Kit Marlowe, rolling along beyond the Temple Gate towards the little bolt-hole that leads past the Clachan. Fleet Street is still redolent of Shakespeare and Ben Jonson ; of Walter Raleigh who lived at Nevil's Court ; of Lovelace the cavalier poet ; of Charles II

astride his horse in Shoe Lane imagining himself to be actually directing the fire-fighters at the great conflagration ; of Steele and Addison and Boswell and Sam Johnson and Oliver Goldsmith and Izaak Walton, the haberdasher-fisherman who had a shop at Mitre Court. All these personages, generations apart, some of them, have contributed to the making of Fleet Street's name and reputation. I do not suppose that Dr. Johnson ever said, " Come, let us take a walk down Fleet Street." That was probably one of Boswell's interpolations in company with so many of the sayings he attributed to his idol. Besides, I do not suppose the learned doctor ever took a walk either for exercise or entertainment, unless it was to reach the nearest objective. Then after the Georgian era there appears to have been something like a hiatus in the matter of names of importance. For a time—and before our time—the Street appears to have been dominated by the Bell family. John Bell, Robert Bell, John Browne Bell, with Bell's *Weekly Messenger* ran things imperiously in company with the Walters of *The Times*. The extreme of taxation on advertisements as well as white paper made publication an exceedingly

expensive affair so that there were few fly-by-night enterprises at the beginning of the last century. Mr. Stanley Morison states in his interesting history of *The English Newspaper* that about this time stamped paper was so valuable that he has seen a sheet of *Bell's Weekly Messenger* patched in two places before printing in order to prevent waste. No allowance was made by the kindly Government for spoiled stamps! Next to the Walter supremacy and the Bell resonance there was a gentleman named Perry who challenged the lead of Printing House Square with the *Morning Chronicle*, but after a long struggle extending over a period of nearly forty years the *Chronicle* gave up the attempt. Then there was the *Morning Post*, which is still with us; the *Morning Herald*, which died in 1869, and the *Daily News*, also still pushing on. But there were few personalities in the early Victorian days. Fleet Street was undergoing the stage of coma preceding the birth of the new journalism in the late 'eighties under the ægis of Stead and "Tay Pay" O'Connor.

Then came the period which I and those of us who are still alive may reasonably call "The Press in our Time." It was a revolutionary

epoch. All the rigid rules and observations of other days went by the board. There was a ruthless sweeping out of odds and ends. The rag-tag and bobtail of the old school were flung on the scrap-heap. Many say it was a sad hour for British journalism when Stead and O'Connor heaved all the old junk overboard. I am not among the many. I think it was inevitable. The change was long overdue, and with it came, at least, an enlightened if not always too dignified a Press. The "high-brows" of the time, Andrew Lang at the head, looked upon the *Pall Mall Gazette* as a perfectly outrageous imposition. Looked at to-day through our modern eyes the old *Pall Mall* was slow, cumbrous, creaky and not at all convincing.

With the new era came the new men. Fleet Street began to look up once more. Its literary lights began to shine. It once more had its leaders. When I came into the "Street" as a special correspondent in 1887 it was beginning to throw out the cobwebs, and here and there in one newspaper or the other there were personalities worth considering and developing. Anonymity was still the watchword and it required outstanding genius to break through.

When I returned three years later there were already signs that this had been accomplished. People were buying the *Daily Telegraph* to read what George Augustus Sala had to say on any subject from fried fish to the Philippine rebellion ; Stead was a daily exhorter ; “ Tay Pay ” had made a great success with his “ Mainly About People ” column in the *Star* ; David Christie Murray, the novelist, was writing “ Beachcomber ” articles with great success ; Beattie Kingston, G. E. Buckle, Frank Harris, Edmund Yates, Archibald Forbes, Henry Labouchere, “ Tommy ” Bowles, Sir John Robinson, Henry Lucy (“ Toby, M.P.”), Mudford of *The Times*, Greenwood of the *St. James’s*, Moy Thomas, E. T. Cook, Louis J. Jennings, M.P., John Morley, Justin Huntley McCarthy—what a list of Fleet Street luminaries to dazzle the imagination of the ambitious young zealot in the provinces hoping one day to set his feet on the Street of Ink !

But these were really not the men who made the journalism that we know to-day. These came later. I might, perhaps, take from the list the name of G. E. Buckle, who for over a quarter of a century edited *The Times* with

distinction. Mr. Buckle lives now in honourable and honoured retirement. He has well deserved the great respect in which he is held. I take him from the list because he was one of the first to lift the veil from the ancient face of the recluse lady known until his time as the British Press. He dared to put a contributor's initials to a book review shortly after his accession to the holy seat of Delane. This was in 1884. Further, he broke through all the rules by printing a plate—not a very good one either—of the new Forth Bridge, though this was not the first time that *The Times* had broken its rules; and you will remember Mr. Moberley Bell's violence when I suggested to him ten years later that *The Times* would, one day, as it does now, print illustrations every day as a part of its business.

So I place Mr. Buckle among the immortals who are responsible for the journalism of to-day as we see it. Next I put three men, all bound together, in that they started at scratch, went ahead together and all made their mark and their fortunes—Newnes, Pearson, Harmsworth. Each in his own particular way added something to the benefit as well as the detriment of British

journalism ; Harmsworth, naturally, far ahead of all others. It is not to say that without Alfred Harmsworth, Viscount Northcliffe, the Press of to-day would have been different. There is not an iota of justification for such a suggestion. Northcliffe was merely piecing together the blocks and bricks that were given to him by the invisible hand of Contemporaneous Events. Further, he had eminent teachers and masters whom he copied and on whom he sometimes improved—Pulitzer, Bennett, Hearst, and Ochs of the United States. Pulitzer gave him the first lessons in intensive publicity and the art of what he was fond of calling “to put the big strawberry at the top of the basket”; Bennett was an adept master in the course of forcing his theories on his readers whether they agreed or not; Hearst was the new boy who came in a little after the matriculation of the others endowed with some wonderful new tricks which the English boy was not in the least slow at adopting, and finally Ochs, that calm, unobtrusive philosopher of the *New York Times*, tried to teach him, though he would never learn it, that a great newspaper can be made without the use of megaphones, limelights,

superlatives or cymbals. Harmsworth therefore came along to his *Daily Mail* zenith well equipped for his great and glorious career and so he fulfilled his destiny. Pearson, too, must be allotted a great place in the making of modern journalism. He had all the attributes that should make for success in the line he sought to follow, but he was baulked by two circumstances. One was that he went into politics without understanding the devious twists and turns of the most difficult business in the world, and in doing so he inadvertently neglected his new daily paper, which had to be left to other hands. Secondly, he was fast going blind; otherwise he could have overcome his difficulties and so devoted himself to the paper which he had founded and which he loved. But his blindness was a blessing in disguise. He was not a great success as a personal journalist. As a blind man he was a Heaven-sent blessing to his country, for without Pearson's cheery voice, his hopeful guidance, his unsleeping vigilance, the hundreds of unhappy blinded men of the War would not have emerged almost content and full of hope for the future. Cyril Arthur Pearson's part in journalism was great; his

place as a public benefactor can never be minimised.

It was in May 1902 when I succumbed to the blandishments of his ebullient and attractive personality, and took on my shoulders the responsibility of nursing an infant newspaper called the *Daily Express*.

Pearson had all the initiative, the enthusiasm and the will to win, but while he knew a lot about weekly newspapers he was inexperienced in the direction of a great daily.

The *Daily Express* had then not been going for long. Pearson was trying to find for it a place in the sun, which was, however, denied it by the fact that his opponent whom he sought to pull down was the young giant, Alfred Harmsworth, who had four years' start with the *Daily Mail*.

I had for long been observing young Mr. Pearson floundering in heavy seas. He was the most lovable man I had met for many years, and I felt terribly sorry for him; so I decided to throw in my lot with the *Daily Express*.

When I informed Harmsworth of my purpose, and that the *Daily Mail* would see me no more, he leaned back in his armchair in his Napoleon-

like attitude, looked at me for a full minute without moving a muscle, and then said :

“ Blumenfeld, you are the world’s champion idiot. You are the most quixotic ass in Fleet Street. You have got the mind of a child. Of course, Pearson is a nice man. Of course his is a lovable character, but that will never get him or you anywhere.

“ You will break your heart trying to get that newspaper on its feet. It has no chance. How can it? Here we are with a circulation of 1,200,000. That is the limit of circulation. No other newspaper can ever reach that figure, and we have only got it because of the war which is now going on.” (It was towards the end of the Boer War, when people were eagerly buying the paper that was beating the War Office with news.)

Harmsworth went on musing.

“ Aside from that, no other paper can ever expect to reach the great heights that we have achieved without throwing away a million of money, and Pearson has not got it. I warn you. You will be back here in six months.”

That was nearly thirty-four years ago. Alfred

Harmsworth became Sir Alfred Harmsworth, Baronet, and later Viscount Northcliffe. The limit of circulation that he fixed for his own paper was far surpassed by it in later years, and the wreckage and despair which he so confidently predicted for the *Daily Express* are evident to-day in Fleet Street, where thousands of people daily gaze on the great palace of glass, silver, and onyx, the monument of popular success.

When I came to "the new paper" one had to walk warily in the halfpenny field. All the world's snobs turned up their noses because the popular papers cost only a halfpenny and not a penny, and were therefore considered to be a sort of social outcast.

All the others cost a penny or more. The *Daily Chronicle*, the *Daily News*, the old *Standard* and the *Morning Post* were all ponderous and had a wide acreage of close type, but they were eminently respectable because they cost more than a halfpenny!

Here is an instance of the snobbery of those days. I remember just about that time, when the Boer War was still on, a friend of mine suggested that I should allow him to put my name down for membership in a particularly interesting

and desirable club, and I agreed. The next day he came to me and said :

“ I have made a mistake. I do not think I ought to put your name down for that club. You see, you are the editor of a halfpenny paper, and that will not do. The committee would probably ‘ pill you.’ ”

So I did not take the risk. When the *Daily Express* became a penny newspaper, in company with all the other halfpenny papers during the late War, the committee of that club sent a man to me and asked me if I would like to join. (I was no longer a halfpenny editor.) I may say, parenthetically, that in the meantime the attractiveness of the club was less apparent to me than it had been during the Boer War, and so I did not accept.

The Lawson family, the late Viscount Burnham and his father of the *Daily Telegraph*, contributed their full quota in observing always the full rules of the game of journalism as it is played. The elder Burnham was a consummate journalist and much of his natural talent descended to his ever-beloved son. The late Lord Russell of Liverpool leaves his mark on his trade ; Phillips of

the *Yorkshire Post*, Feeney of Birmingham, Finlay of Edinburgh, Sir Robert Bruce of Glasgow, happily still alive, all belong to the roster. None more so, however, than the late C. P. Scott, of the *Manchester Guardian*, a real journalist, a fighter in the ranks, a leader in the van. He was the sort of editor who went to his office every evening, not in a great limousine car, but, in spite of his eighty years, on the humble bicycle. He wrote his own leaders and read his own proofs, and when he died he left behind him a wonderful title—that of a Great Journalist ! He had a sense of humour, too, in spite of his Sir Galahad temperament. Sir Galahad, I may say parenthetically, had no sense of humour ; else he could never have done what he did. I recall the morning when Mr. Scott, as Editor of the *Manchester Guardian*, the late E. T. Raymond as Editor of the *Evening Standard*, and myself on behalf of the *Daily Express*, were lined up before a divisional Court of three stern Solons, headed by the Lord Chief Justice, on the charge of Contempt of Court in that we had printed something in relation to a certain murderer named Mahon. He had not yet been tried and our gossip about him was considered to be prejudicial to the man.

The judges looked gloomy and foreboding. The alternative to a heavy fine was a month anyhow, and it looked like a month, though none of us had seen the offending paragraph ; which proves again that editors should read every line or suffer the consequences. Anyhow the little article meant nothing. It was about a girl who said she knew the alleged murderer and gave details of some of his sayings. Innocent enough, but *sub judice*. The present Lord Hailsham, who defended me, leaned over to me and said, " It looks like a month." Sir William Jowitt for Mr. Scott, leaned over and said, " It looks like a month." Sir Patrick Hastings, prosecuting for the Government, was most anxious that we should have the month. Mr. Scott turned to me and said, " Do you play bridge ? " I assented. " Right," said the eighty-year-old warrior ; " we will have a month of bridge." Unfortunately we were only heavily fined ! The joke on Mr. Scott was that Lord Hewart, the man who pronounced sentence on him to the extent of £1,000, was Scott's former secretary ! Lord Hewart himself was once a parliamentary reporter on the *Guardian*.

Then comes a list of names of modern journalists whom we must credit with having influenced

the Fleet Street of to-day, some one way, others the other—J. Alfred Spender, A. G. Gardiner, Sidney Low, Charles E. Hands, H. A. Gwynne, Wickham Steed, George Bernard Shaw, H. G. Wells, Clement Shorter, Thomas Marlowe, H. W. Wilson, Julian Ralph, James Douglas, H. W. Massingham, Sir Norman Angell, J. L. Garvin. Proprietorially, too, there are names which are not to be neglected. Over and above the majority I place Lord Beaverbrook, who by this time may justifiably claim to be not only a first-class proprietor but a first-class journalist as well. I have been associated with him ever since he came to London, which was in 1910. From the first he was attracted by Fleet Street, and presently he joined me in the conduct of the *Daily Express*, of which in course of time he became the chief proprietor. He has learned things since those far-off days and learned them well. If he had been taught the mechanics of the trade in his youth he would certainly have become one of the world's foremost journalists. As it is, without a knowledge of the details he is in that category anyhow. I might say of Lord Rothermere that what Lord Beaverbrook lacks in journalism, Lord Rothermere can supply, and *vice versa*. Between

them, if they could pool the journalistic gifts that have been showered on them, and also that they have acquired through hard-working experience, they would be an irresistible pair.

Lord Camrose is another great newspaper proprietor who is a journalist with practical experience of the calling. All these men have kept Fleet Street where it was ; still the magnet that draws to it the brightly dreaming youth from all the remote edges of the Seven Seas.

CHAPTER X

A PERIOD OF TRANSITION

THE modern newspaper was made possible by mechanical progress which enabled millions of copies to be swiftly printed and circulated, and by universal elementary education which enabled millions of readers to understand what was written for them. In the story of its growth two processes were at work which acted reciprocally on each other. The newspaper was transformed from a political organ to a news and topical organ, and it was developed as a great commercial enterprise, taking rank with the great business undertakings in the country.

What is to be the future of the Press in relation to its functions and organisation? What changes is one likely to see in the functional relations between Press and public during the next decade or so, and how will they affect the conduct of the Press as a commercial enterprise? Will the character and formation of the popular Press continue on the same lines as hitherto, or are we to expect a fundamental change in the direction either of a new development or of a return to the nineteenth-century

practice? Will there be more amalgamations and fewer independent newspapers, or will the large newspaper trusts break up and give place to a number of independent undertakings of smaller enterprise but more definitely avowed purpose? Of course, though function and organisation are inseparable and cannot be treated independently of each other, the question of function comes first. In the last resort it is the policy or function of the Press which determines the character of its organisation, and not its organisation which determines its functional character, though often, for a time, this seems to be the case.

As I have already pointed out, the success of the popular Press has been largely due to a bold reversal of the journalistic practice that grew up during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. News, the reporting of events of interest to the average human being, has been placed before the expression of views and ideas in order of importance. This order has been maintained for nearly forty years by newspapers which have achieved the largest circulations. The question now arises, Is the time ripe for change?

In other words, does the better informed, more adult-minded public of to-day require from its newspapers something more than the sensational news-fare and topical *causerie* which the majority of newspapers garnish and dish up for its daily sustenance? Does it demand from them intelligent guidance as well, reasoned opinions and authoritative pronouncements on the important questions of the day—political, social, economic, and even ethical and scientific? There are sure signs that it does. And if newspapers are to maintain their prestige and influence, and in the long run their circulations, they will have to raise their standards to this level of the public taste and intelligence.

One thing, therefore, may be safely prophesied about the newspaper of the future. It will be a more serious publication than at present, and of superior intellectual quality. This is an important aspect of the situation and deserves examination.

The world to-day is going through a period of crisis and transition. The old order has broken down and the new order has not yet been established. Civilisation has temporarily lost its bearings. The Press, which invariably

reflects the spirit and temper of its age, mirrors the prevailing instability, confusion and unrest. It is also affected by them. It is prodigiously active and enterprising, like the public mind it reflects; but like that mind it has no fully settled convictions, no stability, no purpose, no direction.

Let no one be misled by the astonishing technical perfection of the modern newspaper and by its vast circulations into thinking that the Press is in a healthy condition. It is not. These vast circulations are artificial circulations. They are perfectly genuine from the point of view of accountancy; but they are not genuine from the point of view of real journalism. In principle, a newspaper should depend for its circulation on the value it gives as a newspaper. The newspapers of to-day do not. Up to the time of writing (the autumn of 1933) they have been swelling their circulations by all kinds of publicity expedients in the way of insurance, prizes, free gifts and the like, which have no connection whatever with their functions or merits as a newspaper. Up to a point these methods can be justified, and are perhaps necessary. Largely they have been forced on

the newspapers by unhealthy methods of competition. They have incidentally helped to establish the newspaper habit among the masses.

There is also the unquestionable fact that the colossal expenditure connected with modern newspaper production can only be paid for out of advertisement revenue ; and the value of advertisement space in a newspaper depends on its circulation. Still, there is a limit to this kind of thing, and this limit has already been reached—and passed. These costly publicity expedients have strained newspaper finance to breaking point. The newspaper owners themselves dislike these methods ; they are bad for journalism, and the circulations they achieve rest on no solid journalistic foundation. Thousands of readers who register with a popular newspaper because of some attractive bribe that it offers them, hardly bother to read it ; and they are quite ready to transfer their allegiance to a rival paper if it offers them a better bait. So the struggle to force up unreal circulations goes on.

The failure of the Press to perform its higher function is due to yet another cause besides these unhealthy methods of competition. It is

due equally to a mistaken and out-of-date conception of what the public wants and is capable of assimilating. The editors and proprietors of some of our newspapers persist in ignoring the difference between the public of to-day and the public of twenty years ago. They still think of the public as the uneducated masses. They forget that the " masses " ceased to exist after the War, that their place has been taken by a body of intelligent, thinking, inquisitive individuals, eager for educational advancement, and looking for cultural and moral leadership wheresoever they can find it.

I shall be told that the popular newspapers of to-day are far more intelligent journals than those of twenty and thirty years ago ; that they provide far more serious reading, and are incomparably better in every way. Is not the *Daily Mail*, I shall be asked, a far better paper now than it was when it first appeared in 1896 as a " Glorified Tit-Bits " ? And is not the same thing true of most of the other popular journals ? Of course it is. Modern newspapers *are* far more intelligent than their predecessors. That is not my point. My point is that while the Press has grown, the public has

grown faster. The public has become adult-minded, the Press is still adolescent. The popular Press grew up in a stable society, one of whose cardinal beliefs was that democracy was the cure for all things. The belief prevailed that, inspired by some deep mystical process, men in the aggregate were able to form fairly just but somewhat incoherent views that it was the duty of the Press to clarify, interpret and present. No one knew whether the Press led or followed the crowd. It was impossible to say which it did, for it was itself one of the crowd. That it became so was a stroke of genius on the part of its founders; it was the secret of its success and power.

Actually the Press led the crowd. The "massocracy," which had only just learned to read and had not yet begun to think, regarded the journalists who wrote for it as wiser and better educated than itself; which was no doubt true. It regarded the written word with awe. What the newspapers said must be right and true, because the people who wrote it were so clever and knew so much—that was the attitude of the semi-educated public of thirty and forty years ago to its popular Press.

To-day that is all changed. The "massocrats" have grown up and become adult-minded. They regard massocratic journalism with a critical eye.

The world is in the throes of a new birth. Our economic system has collapsed. The structure of our society is being transformed. On all sides forces are at work destroying and rebuilding. In every department of life our ideas are being revolutionised and our traditional beliefs questioned. There is much quackery and unwisdom in it all as well as high constructive endeavour; much crude ignorance masquerading as the new enlightenment. Moral and spiritual values, which represent the accumulated wisdom of mankind through the ages, are being ruthlessly discarded in the name of a Modernity which is at present incapable of defining itself in any terms of value at all.

Amid so many unsettling influences, conflicting ideas, strange and complex problems, there is need for a new leadership. But where is this new leadership to be found? Not in the Churches—they are too disunited; besides which, it is not their function to lead and

organise public opinion in the secular field. Not in Parliament—Parliament is as much in need of leadership as the Democracy it is supposed to represent ; its prestige to-day is lower than at any other time within living memory. Nor in the Universities—they are seats of learning rather than schools for the diffusion of knowledge and the guidance of public thought ; though the future may see a great development of their activities in the latter direction.

There remains only the Press. It is the one great democratic institution whose popularity has increased since the War. Its potential moral influence is enormous. It is read by everybody, and everybody looks to it for information and authoritative opinion. Never in all its history has the Press had such an opportunity of leadership. Never was it more necessary that it should use it wisely and conscientiously.

We all know that the public loves thrills, sensations, frivolities. It always has and always will, however educated and intelligent it may become. That is human nature. But when you have said that you have only defined one side of the public mentality. What is the public ? It is a number of individuals con-

sidered in the mass. Now individual psychology is a composite thing. Man is a complex creature who reacts to life as both a thinking and a sentient being. He has diverse tastes, moods, needs and inclinations, which are often in conflict with each other. He has his serious as well as his frivolous side. He functions through his understanding as well as through his emotions. He thinks as well as feels.

The point I want to drive home is that men in the aggregate do not change the psychology they possess as individuals. The so-called "Man in the Street," who as an individual is a compound of higher and lower faculties—however crudely his higher faculties may function in any given case—is not suddenly transformed into a purely frivolous and emotional creature merely because he becomes a member of the great newspaper public. The same man who eagerly devours his newspaper for its sensational news items or tit-bits of gossip, very likely makes other and more intelligent demands on it as well. Having slaked his sensational thirst, he may now want to sit down to a solid meal of intelligent fare. And this he does not always get.

The practical results of the refusal of the popular newspapers to recognise that they have now to deal with an intelligent and adult-minded public, are to be seen in the inadequate handling of News in most of them. The character of News is changing. In the past, when life was more settled, the Press and its readers were in agreement as to what constituted News. To-day it is different. Amid the drastic rearrangements of life and its values that are taking place, complex problems are much to the fore. I am not suggesting that anything new in human experience is happening, but the environment in which events occur is new and unfamiliar, and many of the events interest a much larger public than in former times. In these circumstances, News often refers to matters in which the average reader is ignorant, but of which he would like to have knowledge. Here the journalist often fails him, either because he has not this knowledge himself, or because he does not realise that the reader wants it.

I shall probably be labelled a pessimist. I am not. A pessimist is one who not only deplores things as they are, but thinks they

must inevitably get worse. He has no hopes for the future. In this respect I am anything but a pessimist. On the contrary, when I try to imagine the Press of to-morrow my mind becomes a play of the most optimistic fancies. It is my firm conviction that the journalism of the future will be far superior to anything we have to-day, or have had at any time in the past. Sooner or later the Press will have adjusted itself to the new conditions, and once it has done so, its power and influence will be greater than ever before, by reason of the higher moral and intellectual appeal by which they are conditioned.

My optimism is based on the simple fact that in the psychological relations between the Press and the public the dominant partner is the public. The Press may temporarily hypnotise the public, to suit its own ends. It may mislead it, bully it, misinterpret it, disparage it, vulgarise and even debase it—but only for a time. In the long run it must conform to the standards of the public taste and intelligence. And these are rising steadily every year. This is due to a number of influences, among the chief of which is the Radio.

It is not necessary to point out the vast educative possibilities inherent in the Radio. Both directly and indirectly, wireless provides the most potent instrument for education and "uplift" that has appeared in the world since the invention of printing. It is to the honour of the B.B.C., and principally its conductor Sir John Reith, that it realised this fact from the first, and that it seized the opportunity with both hands.

The direct educational work of the B.B.C. is still in its infancy. The extent to which its scholastic activities may develop almost defies speculation. Very likely we shall one day have a national system of education conducted by wireless. Such speculations, however, are not my present concern. What is important for my subject is the cultural influence that the Radio in the hands of the B.B.C. is exercising on the general public. This influence is already great, and it increases with each year that passes. It is an influence which gathers strength from the force of its own momentum. The Press cannot remain blind to it.

Roughly speaking the wireless public is co-extensive with the newspaper public. It is

as large as that of all the newspaper circulations put together. Broadcasting to this nation-wide public is the monopoly of the B.B.C. This gives the B.B.C. a position of freedom and independence in regard to public opinion which the Press can never command. The B.B.C. can take risks with the public. It can risk a temporary unpopularity with one or more sections of the public, in pursuit of a policy it believes to be right, in a way that a newspaper cannot. If a newspaper offends its readers they transfer their allegiance to one of its many rivals. Listeners cannot show their displeasure with the B.B.C. in the same way. If they dislike the wireless programme they have no redress. They cannot exact vengeance by tuning-in to a rival organisation. They have not even the satisfaction of feeling that the offending speaker or performer knows when they switch off. If they air their grievance in the Press, the only result of their protest is to call forth counter-protests from other listeners in praise of the items they dislike. All they can do is to switch off and grumble. They may even smash their wireless sets in their wrath—that has been done—but next day they repent and get a new

one, so that in the end the Radio industry profits from their displeasure. The only thing they do not do is to cancel their wireless licences, and withdraw from the listening public. They may threaten to do so, but they never do. They have formed the wireless habit as surely as they have formed the newspaper habit. The Radio has entered into their lives and they cannot do without it.

With a nation-wide public to cater for, the B.B.C. naturally cannot hope to please all listeners at all times. Very wisely it does not attempt such an impossible task. And this is where its monopolist position gives it such an advantage over the Press. The newspaper is more or less compelled to generalise its notion of the public. It has to create the fiction of the "average reader," a mental abstraction who has no existence in fact. Like the "Man in the Street" he represents everybody in general and nobody in particular. He is a necessary symbol for the newspaper, whose job it is to try to please all its readers at the same time. Nevertheless, he is a nuisance, for in practice he becomes the lowest common denominator of the public taste and intelligence. The

B.B.C. is not enslaved to the fiction of the "average listener" to anything like the same extent. It can particularise its public. It can treat it sectionally, classifying listeners into any number of different categories based on varying principles of differentiation which cut across each other to the benefit of the listening public as a whole. It arranges its programmes so that high-brows, middle-brows, low-brows, and all gradations of brow betwixt and between are satisfied in turn.

I am not saying that the B.B.C. does its job perfectly. It is vulnerable to attack in any number of points. My contention is that an institution for popular entertainment and instruction like the B.B.C. which can and does adapt itself to the requirements of all cultural levels in a nation-wide public, inevitably exerts, an improving influence on the standard of public taste, quite apart from any special activities it may take in the sphere of popular education.

If a comparison were possible between two such mythical creatures as the "average listener" and the "average newspaper reader," one would be tempted in view of so much that

passes in the popular Press to make the absurd suggestion that the "average listener" is better educated, or at any rate more intelligent and more adult-minded than the average reader of the newspaper. He is not. He happens to be the same person. It would be a good thing perhaps if editors tried sometimes to imagine what the reactions of the "average listener" must be to much of the stuff they serve up to him as the "average reader"! He has listened, let us suppose, to a wireless discussion on one of those complex political or economic problems which so perplex the statesmanship of our times. It may be on Disarmament, or War Debts, or India, or Anglo-Soviet relations, or on some vital issue of our domestic affairs. But whatever the subject, it has been debated by two well-informed spokesmen, each of whom, while arguing his case as forcibly as he can, has paid strict regard to the actual facts of the situation, and tried to meet the arguments of his opponent fairly and squarely. Having had both sides of the question clearly put to him, he now understands the problem in its fundamental aspects, and can form an intelligent judgment on future developments. Next morning he opens

his newspaper for further enlightenment. What does he find? The same facts but presented according to the political view-point of the particular newspaper! There must be a change here, for people, by reason of wireless exposition of both sides, are beginning to grasp the fundamentals of national and international problems. These people are rapidly becoming the great majority of the reading public.

I would not be misunderstood. I am not attacking head-lines and streamer head-lines as such. It would ill become me to do so. It was I who introduced the streamer head-line into English journalism. Head-lines have been the making of popular journalism. The aim of the popular newspaper is to arrest the reader's attention, stimulate his interest, and enable him to see at a glance what is most significant in the day's news. This it does by a liberal use of head-lines. But the head-line, and the "streamer" especially, can be abused. Let it be as startling and sensational as you like, but it must not distort news merely for sensational effects. Often it is used unintelligently, or with an unscrupulous disregard of actualities. Either it is wasted on some trivial matter that

does not deserve the prominence given to it, or it is used to give currency to a sensational rumour that has no basis in fact but which the newspaper wants to propagate for its own ends. A certain amount of exaggeration is legitimate, even necessary, but exaggeration does not mean falsification. A magnifying-glass is not the same thing as a distorting mirror. The headline should not be used to create a wrong impression of what has happened, or to falsify news-values. Unfortunately it is constantly being misused in this way by some section of the Press of to-day.

Again, I am not suggesting that leading articles should become philosophical dissertations. No one expects the leading article of a popular newspaper to emulate *The Times* in the sobriety of its diction and the sententious vagueness of its pontifical judgments. Brevity and directness, clear forcible statement, boldness in generalisation, staccato rhetoric, exaggeration of emphasis—these are essential qualities in the style of a good popular leader. At its best it is an extremely effective style. But in so many instances it is used with not nearly enough sense of editorial responsibility,

or with insufficient respect for the reader's intelligence.

There is one respect, however, in which the newspapers have been quick to respond to the challenge of the Radio : or, rather, they have been stimulated to increased enterprise in a journalistic practice which started some years before the introduction of the Radio. I refer to the practice now general among editors of inviting signed contributions from distinguished men and women of the day on matters upon which they can speak with authority. Take up any issue of an important newspaper, and you will usually find a signed article on some matter of cultural or national interest, contributed by a leading authority on the subject; or failing that, an interview with some prominent personage who has just said something or done something or produced something which has stirred the public imagination.

What are the effects of this practice on the public intelligence and on journalism? How can we assess its tendencies? There can be no doubt, I think, that the advantages of this new journalistic development far outweigh its disadvantages. I am looking at the matter now

from the point of view of the general public. From the point of view of the journalistic profession I am not so sure. But the community as a whole benefits.

The same educative value I attributed just now to the various talks and discussions arranged by the B.B.C. attaches to the informative articles written by outside specialists, which make their daily appearances in the Press. It is even greater, in that the written word sinks deeper, and has more lasting effect than the spoken word. Nor is this all. What is loosely called the democratisation of knowledge is becoming actualised in a very real sense. This means that the learned professions are gradually becoming mobilised in the service of popular education. Professors are being drawn from their studies into the streets and the market-place. They no longer think it *infra dig.* to write for the newspapers. They are beginning to welcome the opportunity the Press gives them of making known the results of their labours and researches to a wider public, and of gaining large and eager audiences for new theories and ideas, the reaction to which in the academic circles in which they move may be

prejudiced or ultra-conservative. At the same time, in writing for the Press they have to express themselves in language that everybody can understand. They must write clearly, simply and to the point, and they must wear their learning lightly. Their job is not to display the profundity of their knowledge, but to enable as many people as possible to plumb its depths, to touch bottom therein. Which is all for the good of their own souls, and to the ultimate benefit of learning. The gift of popular exposition they acquire through their excursions into journalism, influences their work in other fields. It serves to vitalise their style and to humanise their outlook. It is astonishing what a difference there is between the academic style of to-day and that of the last generation. The scholarly works of thirty or forty years ago were mostly written in a prolix, ponderous, severely technical style, in which the light of knowledge was often obscured by the pedantry of learning. The modern professor has discarded the notion that a learned work loses in authority in proportion as it becomes intelligible to the uninitiated. He writes clearly and agreeably, and only uses his technical vocabulary when no other words

will serve his turn. At the back of his mind he is thinking of the large public which he hopes will read his work. So he strives to be interesting, and that makes him human and alive. On occasion he even dares to be flippant.

Journalism is, of course, not the only influence which has tended to democratise and humanise the academic mind. The alacrity with which our professors and specialists and leading public men are responding to the invitation of editors to write articles for the popular Press is a sign of the times. It means that henceforward the Universities will be drawn into the main stream of the national life, and that the intellectual leadership they now give to a chosen few will be extended to the community as a whole. If, as many people believe, we are on the eve of an age of leisure, in which people will have more time for reading and study, there is no telling what strange developments we shall see in the scholastic enterprise of the Press. It is not fantastic to imagine a time when it will enter into competition with the University itself. We shall have the newspapers providing readers with regular courses of instruction in the subjects of a University curriculum. A competent staff

of press-lecturers recruited from the Universities will be engaged who will have so many columns of the paper at their disposal in which to expound their subjects and direct the studies of the reader, and yearly examinations will be held in which these journalist-professors will be able to examine the progress of their newspaper-pupils. Diplomas will be awarded, and a newspaper degree accepted as a test of proficiency. Indeed, it will be the pride of every newspaper to make its degrees worth having, since the circulation of the paper will to some extent depend on the value attached by the public to the academic distinction it confers. Other things being equal, people will be guided in their choice of a newspaper by academic considerations. Between two rival dailies they will subscribe to one in preference to the other because its lectures are better or because its diploma stands higher in the public estimation. It seems a wild speculation at the moment, but fifty years hence may see something of the kind realised.

But to return to the present day. How does this invasion of the Press by the specialist from outside affect journalism itself? On the whole

the public benefits, and it will benefit more and more as time goes on. But does the journalistic profession benefit? I am afraid it does not. On the contrary, the decline in the general level of journalistic writing to-day as compared with the beginning of the century is due in great measure to this very development which is so advantageous in other respects.

What is happening is, that the good all-round journalist of thirty and forty years ago, who was capable of writing a first-rate article on almost any subject presented to him, is rapidly becoming eliminated. In my young days every great newspaper was well staffed with men of this type. They were men of good education, versatile minds, and wide reading, who could write well and chose journalism as a profession because it provided just the right sort of scope for their somewhat indefinable abilities. They were journalists by vocation—the sort of men who have formed the backbone of the journalistic profession throughout its history. Their type is now becoming extinct. It is being eliminated by the specialist. This is a great pity, for it is they who keep up the literary

standards of journalism and give it its distinctive character as a profession.

Usually these men were employed to write the leading articles and the various special articles on matters of current interest, which the editor wanted written ; or they filled the posts of Foreign Correspondent in the various capitals. These latter posts have been greatly cut down in recent years ; besides which, they no longer provide the same thrilling opportunities as of old. Wireless and the telephone and the various News Agencies have reduced the functions of the Foreign Correspondent to a shadow of their former importance. Hence there are few openings for the type of man I have in mind in this department of newspaper activity. Their function as leader-writers likewise has greatly declined in importance with the development of the modern newspaper. As writers of special articles their scope has been narrowed down in two ways. In the first place, they themselves are being compelled to specialise. The incursion into journalism of distinguished men and women outside the journalistic profession, and the increasing demand of the public for expert knowledge

from its newspapers, have brought into fashion the signed article ; and that has put the general utility writer out of action. He no longer, under cover of the editorial anonymity, writes as one with authority on a number of different subjects, each of which he has read up industriously for the occasion, but of which he has no special knowledge. The man who puts his name to the article he writes is personally responsible for what it contains, and he is supposed to have expert knowledge of his subject. And so the all-round journalist has to specialise. He becomes " Our Aviation Correspondent," " Our Naval Correspondent," " Our Agricultural Expert," " Our Labour Correspondent," and any other sort of " Correspondent " or " Expert." And to that line he must stick. His name becomes associated in the public mind with some particular subject and carries no weight outside it.

But that is not all. When something happens which brings his subject to the fore, it is not he who gets the limelight, but the big specialist who is called in from outside. He is the ordinary practitioner good enough for everyday use, but not for the great occasion.

It is an unsatisfactory position and bad for journalism. Young men with brains and ambitions and high educational qualifications will no longer be attracted to a profession which ceases to offer adequate scope to their abilities, and there is a consequent decline in the intellectual standards of journalism.

It is perfectly true, as I have tried to make clear, that on balance the public certainly gains from this modern development in editorial practice. But it is, I think, being carried too far. There is more than a touch of snobbery in it. It is becoming a cult of the "celebrity," a cult of anybody with a handle to his or her name, even if that handle be only a title. And even in cases where these objections cannot be raised, the practice often defeats its purpose. Many of the distinguished authorities to whom editors appeal for special articles do not know how to write.

Doubtless as time goes on, a satisfactory solution will be found to the problem I have outlined, and journalism will once more commend itself as an attractive career to aspiring young men with high intellectual qualifications. To imagine otherwise would be to ignore the deep

psychological factors that have made journalism the power it is in the world. At the same time I think we must face the fact that the day of the versatile journalist who could turn his mind to any subject and write intelligently about it is over. He will never disappear altogether, but his importance on the newspaper will continue to diminish. In an age in which knowledge increases faster than the human mind can absorb it, when every subject is split up, and re-split again, into a number of special departments, each of which demands the whole life-energies of any mind that would know it thoroughly, every profession is rapidly becoming a fraternity of specialists. Journalism cannot escape this inevitable tendency. In a world of specialists, journalists too must specialise.

The trained journalist, not the amateur, will most certainly be needed on the news-side of the future paper. Among other things, it will be his job to supply the more intelligent technique in the exposition of News which the growing complexity in the character of modern News so urgently demands. More space and more serious consideration will likewise be given to editorial articles and comments in the

newspaper of the future, and he will find more scope than at present in this field. He will also get new chances if, as seems likely, the next decade or so sees a great increase in the number of daily and weekly journals representing various groups and sections of opinion in the country.

Before I indulge in further prognostications about the future of the Press, let me once and for all disabuse the reader of any notion he may have that the Press has anything to fear from the competition of the Radio. I touched on this matter before, when I pointed out that, far from being a rival to the newspaper, the Radio was in reality a powerful ally. The only field in which it might prove a dangerous competitor is the field of advertisement ; but there is no need to worry about that at the moment. There is no sign that public opinion in this country would sanction the selling of broadcasting time to private firms for advertising purposes ; nor is there any immediate likelihood of the B.B.C. wanting to raise this issue.

Apart from the fact that people are not satisfied with only hearing the news of the day, they want to see it written down in black and white,

there is also the inconvenience of the time factor to be considered. In issuing its News Bulletin the B.B.C. has to obey the discipline of the clock. The News is read out at certain times, and if people wish to hear it, they must listen then. Perhaps they cannot, or the moment is inconvenient, or they tune in too late because their clocks are slow. Anyway, they are tied to a fixed hour, which is always a nuisance, and is apt to become a tyranny if it has to be made a regular thing. Their newspaper they can read at their leisure. It is there to be picked up when they want it. They can read it at breakfast, or in the Tube or in the lunch hour, or just whenever suits them.

Again, if the listener to the News misses anything—the name of a person perhaps, or an interesting statistical figure—he cannot stop the announcer and ask him to repeat what he said. The same objection applies with even greater force to wireless talks and discussions. The most attentive listener may allow his mind to wander for a moment; or something that is said may intrigue him so much that he dwells on it too long, and so misses the next point in

the argument; and what he misses is lost. There is no referring back.

The point I am trying to emphasise is, that the spoken word cannot perform the function of the written word, and cannot replace it. Neither in its News service nor in other matters does Broadcasting compete with the Press. What it does is to stimulate the listener's interest and send him to his newspaper for verification and further enlightenment. It becomes, therefore, a valuable ally of the newspaper.

But how about Television? Surely that will make Broadcasting a serious rival to the newspaper? Not, I think, to any great extent. Certainly when television is perfected and a news-summary equal in size, say, to a page of a newspaper can be thrown on the screen for a listener to *read*, one disability of wireless transmission will have been removed. But the inconvenience of the time-factor still remains. The "looker-in" will be just as much bound by the clock as the listener. Besides, there are limits to the possibilities of television. One can hardly imagine a whole newspaper being broadcast by its means. And if such a performance became technically possible, how

would the "looker-in" set about reading it? How much time would be allotted to him for the process?

No, I do not think that even when television becomes an established thing we shall see any great extension in the activities of the Broadcasting News Service. Whatever happens, the wireless news-summaries can never have the variety, colour, freedom and individuality of the newspaper. They must always remain colourless statements of fact and non-committal. Probably the theatre, the concert hall and those who cater for the public amusement in sport have more cause to be alarmed at the prospect of television than the newspaper. It has been suggested that the evening newspapers may flash late night television editions as an advertisement, each journal being allotted its own wave-length. This seems to me a likely development.

CHAPTER XI

THE PRESS OF THE FUTURE

ONE of the facts I have repeatedly emphasised is, that the Press invariably reflects the character and demands of its own age. If, therefore, we wish to form an idea of what newspapers will be like fifty years hence, we must try to picture to ourselves what the state of the world and the conditions of human society will be at that date. This is no easy task at a time when, on the one hand, scientific and technical inventions are developing with such marvellous rapidity, and when, on the other hand, the social and economic order upon which the structure of modern civilisation has been built, is passing through a period of revolution and transition, the ultimate outcome of which no man can predict with certainty. All we can do is to hazard a few general assumptions in the light of present-day tendencies.

It is safe to assume that fifty years hence the world will be far more cosmopolitan than it is to-day. All such inventions as wireless, the telephone, the cinema and aviation tend to bring the nations closer together and to create

a cosmopolitan outlook. In fifty years' time international communication by telephone will have become general. So will air traffic. People will travel by air as regularly as they now go by train or motor. Great numbers of people will possess their own aeroplanes just as they now possess their own motor-cars. If, as many aviation experts think, aircraft will soon be able to double and treble their speed, the distance which now separates place from place will be virtually annihilated. With these increased facilities for foreign travel there will be a constant stream of visitors from one country to another. People will week-end at Rome or Rapallo or Moscow, just as they now week-end at Brighton or Clacton or Paris. (I am assuming, of course, that by this time the European situation will have achieved a rational settlement, and that the stupid and sometimes savage embargo imposed by various Governments on the entry of "foreigners" will have been abolished.) With so much intercourse between the nationals of various countries, intellectual horizons will be broadened, and there will be a corresponding enlargement in the geographical area of public interest. People will want to

know what is going on in the countries they have visited, and where perhaps they have formed cultural or personal contacts of one kind or another. They will expect the newspapers to keep them well informed about all the latest happenings and cultural developments in these countries. Thus the newspaper of the future will devote far more space to news from abroad than is customary at the moment.

Let me say in passing that I am not one of those who think that the majority of people will devote their coming era of leisure to intellectual pursuits. Education develops a person's intelligence; it improves his taste, sharpens his judgment, broadens his outlook, teaches him to take an interest in things, and enables him to lead a full and well-balanced life. But it does not necessarily make him a student, or turn him into an "intellectual." So when I assume that the leisured public of forty or fifty years hence will be better educated, more intelligent and more serious-minded than the public of to-day, I am not anticipating a public of high-brows all desperately keen on improving their minds. There will certainly be a larger intellectual minority than at present, but it will still

be only a small percentage of the population. When every allowance has been made for an all-round improvement in the public taste, the fact remains that the actual interests of the great majority of people will run in more or less the same directions as they do now. The difference will be in the keener intelligence with which they will pursue their interests, and in the greater knowledge and maturer judgment they will bring to bear on the problem of life and the questions of the day.

As the rush of life slows down, people will have time to read their newspapers properly. It will no longer be necessary for the popular newspaper to give its news and critical commentaries in disjointed snippets. It will be able to organise its reading matter on broader and more solid lines. By this I do not mean that it will lose its brightness and become stodgy and dull and severely serious, but that its reports and articles will have more "body" in them than at present. This will apply not only to the handling of news, but also the treatment of all the miscellaneous subjects which fill the columns of the modern newspaper.

It will apply to all the interests and occupa-

tions which will fill up the spare time of our leisured democracy :—sport, the theatre, the cinema, music, travel, the arts, literature, religion, gardening, physical health, handicrafts, photography, mechanical science, motor-ing, wireless, aviation, domestic economy, and countless other things.

People will read more, and probably write more too. Much more space will be given to book reviews. Probably every newspaper will devote half a page daily to reviews of the latest books.

There will be a great improvement in the journalism of sport. Generally speaking, the sport journalism of our popular newspapers to-day is desperately poor stuff, whether regarded as literature or expert opinion. It mainly consists of gossipy paragraphs about " incidents " and side-issues connected with the players. Little attention is paid to the finer points of the game, except perhaps in Association football and boxing. There is immense scope for literary journalism in the reports of athletic meetings and of such games as cricket, golf, tennis and Rugby football. We have examples of how brilliantly this kind

of thing can be done in the accounts some of our papers give of the golf and tennis championships, and in their epic descriptions of the more important cricket matches. In ancient Greece the prowess of athletes in the Olympic Games inspired the finest Odes—which were recited in public—of the greatest lyric poets. I see no reason why the prowess of our great cricketers and athletes should not inspire our journalists to fine imaginative prose. In the Age of Leisure, when many people will spend half their lives playing games, I have no doubt that it will. It will be for the Press to see that it does.

There is the same need of improvement in musical and theatrical journalism, and in all forms of journalism which deal with the cultural amusements of the public. Take music for example. The musical journalism of nearly all the newspapers is beneath contempt. If a singer or a pianist gives a recital, or a celebrated conductor is on view at a symphony concert, the Musical Reporter—I will not call him Critic—gives us a few tit-bits about the artist's private life and personal idiosyncrasies and probably tells us how much he or she gets for the even-

ing's performance ; but about the concert itself he tells us little or nothing. Or any references he makes to it are so general and inept that one often wonders whether he was there at all. As we have seen, the public is rapidly becoming musically educated, owing to the influence of the B.B.C., so that we may expect to see a vast improvement in the quality of musical journalism during the next few years.

Of course the "Gossip" paragraph will continue side by side with the serious criticism—in music and in everything else. It is a form of publicity which many people desire and pay for ; and it is a feature which the public loves. It gratifies a permanent instinct of man as a social animal. Everyone is interested in the doings, habits and peculiarities of other people, and if they are celebrities, his interest is so much the greater. Hence the popularity of "intimate" biographies and volumes of memoirs. Strictly speaking, people read these books for the "gossip" ; they can find the history elsewhere. Never did the late Lord Morley make a greater mistake than when he eschewed "Gossip" interest, *i.e.* "undress" intimate personal details, in his *Life of Glad-*

stone. The book is now dead, and Gladstone, the Man, died with it.

“Gossip” columns, therefore, will figure as largely in the newspapers of the future as they have done in those of the past. I think, however, that in years to come the Press will use this feature more scrupulously, and certainly with more taste than has been the tendency of late. Public opinion will probably insist on a higher code in this respect, and already there is an improvement.

It will be asked, How will the newspaper be able to meet all these additional demands on its space without becoming unwieldy in size? It will have to provide more space for News, and more space for “magazine” matter. How is it going to do this? Are to we anticipate daily newspapers of 50 to 60 pages? I do not think so.

I do not think that the daily newspaper will ever provide more reading matter than is contained in *The Times* or the *Observer* or the *Sunday Times* to-day. If it did, it would lose its character as a newspaper. The 60-page dailies of the United States do not provide more reading matter than the English dailies. Their

size is swelled by the enormous number of advertisements they carry.

The newspaper of the future will possibly extend to 40 pages, but that will be the maximum. It will meet the extra demands on its space (1) by the more connected organisation of its various subject-matter, (2) by the elimination of many "snippety" odds and ends, and (3) by the issue of weekly supplements on special subjects that interest large sections of its readers.

I do not anticipate much change in the physical shape of our newspapers. The *Evening Standard* is a more handy size than the *Daily Telegraph* or *The Times*. But a reduction to that size would mean many more pages, and that would be cumbrous. Also it would not be advantageous from the point of view of advertisement revenue—at least not for those papers that give their front page to advertisements. But on what basis will the Press of the future be organised? Will the process of amalgamation and trustification continue? Or shall we see a return of the independent organ of opinion conducted by an editor-proprietor? I expect to see both developments.

The organisations owning the newspapers of the future will retain the structure which they have by now acquired, *i.e.* they will be large business concerns of amalgamated companies with vast capital resources able to give the best prices for the best brains and material in the best markets. This will be all to the good so long as these organisations exist not necessarily to make profits only, but primarily to live up to the best traditions of journalism, to speak fearlessly with good intent and without evasion ; and since the present-day newspapers reflect the thoughts of the people rather than inflict their own views, large circulations with the widest possible dissemination are desirable.

At present three-quarters of our newspapers are controlled by large corporations or by local monopolist companies. It is possible that we shall see further amalgamations, and that the process will end in the control of the whole Press of the country by two or three monopolist concerns acting in co-operation. In such a contingency two things will happen.

There will be one or two national newspapers which will concentrate entirely on News and magazine features. They will be as technically

perfect as the latest inventions can make them, and they will have all those journalistic improvements I have mentioned above. But they will cease to be organs of opinion. Editorially they will be neutral. Instead of leading articles of the traditional kind, they will publish daily commentaries by their correspondents in the chief political camps, giving the view of the different parties on the issues of the day. These will be printed side by side, and readers can form their own opinions.

There will be at the same time a revival, under a somewhat different form, of the old type of newspaper which relied for its circulation on its opinions. These newspapers will be run by groups and sectional interests, political and other. They will be complete newspapers in every sense of the word, but they will not attempt to compete with the circulations of the national newspapers. They will cater for a special public. Probably each will specialise in one or two outside features—book reviews, or ecclesiastical news, or foreign news, or science notes, or gardening, or the home just as in the old days the *Daily News* and the *Chronicle* were famous for their literary pages.

These organs of opinion will be controlled by editor-proprietors and not by financial syndicates. A simplification and cheapening in the cost of newspaper production will make this possible. Under the management of independent editors, many of whom will be forcible writers as well, these newspapers will possess soul and individuality. They will not be confined to political party organs. In the Age of Leisure we may expect to see other groups of opinion running daily newspapers. Probably, for example, there will be religious daily papers.

Furthermore, our political and economic system will be transformed. If, say, the compromise which is developing between capital centralisation and state socialism ends in a form of Neo-corporatism, in which the chief trades and industries of the country become unified into large national corporations, controlled by the state, but run as commercial concerns (like the B.B.C. for example), it is quite possible that these bodies will run daily newspapers. They will certainly engage in journalistic activities for publicity purposes.

These new organs of opinion will be national

in the sense that they will have their readers all over the country. Aviation will make national distribution easier. Every newspaper will have its own aerodrome. Any home in any part of the country will be able to have its London newspaper on the breakfast-table. It will no longer be necessary to go to the tremendous expense of laying down duplicate and triplicate plants in the provinces, as, for instance, the *Daily Express* has done.

How will this affect the provincial Press? Not as disastrously as one might think. Our provincial evening papers have held their own pretty well against new competition. Indeed this competition has forced them into a revival of activity, thus producing better and more profitable newspapers. Nor must it be forgotten that London no longer dominates the national life to the same extent as formerly. With the growth in the powers of local and municipal bodies, the provinces have become increasingly self-contained and self-centred, and our leading provincial capitals are now metropolitan in the full sense of the word. Far from anticipating a decline in the activities of the provincial Press, I expect to see a general

increase in its prosperity and importance as the years go on.

Twenty-five years hence most of the news and pictures will be transmitted by wireless. Copy, as it is typed some thousands of miles away, will be received direct on the improved form of linotype machine which scientific and mechanical progress will evolve, while the present mechanical process of stereotyping photographs, *i.e.* printing photographs from cast metal plates, will be superseded by a photographic process direct to the paper.

News seldom happens until the afternoon. I believe that the hour of beginning work in this country, particularly in the provinces, will in ten years' time be advanced to the 8 a.m. observed on the Continent and in America, which will curtail the amount of time available for the perusal of the morning paper; and for this reason, and on account also of the earlier habits of the people, it is the evening newspaper which will come to hold the field except in the great cities, where the morning edition will prevail as the natural purveyor of the news of the day before.

Finally, I believe that as newspapers con-

tinue to grow in intelligence and vision, and evince greater circumspection in regard to what are colloquially termed "stunts"—or in more polite language "Movements of Activity"—they will become increasingly recognised as indispensable adjuncts to the family life, and as guides, counsellors and friends.

I look forward, therefore, with hope and confidence to the Press of 1970, for it will reflect the mind of its public—as it does to-day. I shall not be here to see it, but I look forward just the same.

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